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Lack of interest in charity work

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said he was saddened that some Malaysians lacked interest in doing charity work.

The Prime Minister said if all Malaysians did their bit for charity, more of the less fortunate would benefit.

"Irrespective of our religious or racial background, we must all do some charity work to help the poor," he said.

Dr Mahathir said this when launching Umno's Civil Action Bureau website at the Islamic Arts Museum. Present was Puteri Umno head Azalina Othman Said. The website address is www.bts.org.my.

Dr Mahathir said the Civil Action Bureau was set up to allow more Umno members to be active in welfare work.

"As Muslims, we are required to play a significant role in welfare activities. Unfortunately, we find that many of us are more inclined towards other activities and not very interested in doing charity work," he said.

Dr Mahathir said following the setting up of the bureau, welfare work could be better co-ordinated. This would benefit a bigger section of the under privileged.

He expressed confidence that the bureau could play a positive role to achieve this.

"Through the setting up of the Civil Action Bureau, I believe attention could be given to those in need of aid and sympathy," he said.

Dr Mahathir also spoke about the need for the Malays to close ranks so that they could work together to help the poor.

They, he said, appeared to be confused over the political situation in the country as a result of listening to differing views.

"If previously it was easy to understand the country's politics as it was aimed at giving proper recognition to the Malays, now there are some who feel that this is not important as there are other pressing needs," he said.

He also hoped the bureau could be expanded throughout the country so that welfare work could be extended to help more poor people.

In her speech, Azalina said the bureau had conducted several activities since its launch in October last year.

She said the main objective of the bureau was to help those who did not have the means to solve their problems and to carry out other social work.

The bureau has also set up a service centre to help the people deal with Government agencies, statutory bodies and the private sector.

No fee is charged for services rendered. A training centre has also been established where leadership, civic and nation building courses are held.

Government policies and contemporary issues are explained to those who wish to seek clarification.

Fardu Ain classes and other courses are given free except for English lessons where participants are charged RM2 per lesson.

Azalina said the bureau also conducted Bincang Malam (night discussion) sessions twice a month where dialogues are held with the people.

The bureau has also entered the Malaysian Book Of Records for being able to gather 2,502 people to donate blood within a day in Perak recently. The previous record was 1,500 people.