

21 SEP 2001

Mahathir-Tithes

WORK HARD, EARN EXTRA AND GIVE MORE TITHES, PM TELLS MUSLIMS

JITRA, Sept 21 (Bernama) -- The Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Muslims can do more to help their needy brethrens by working hard to boost income and subsequently pay more tithes.

"There is no way for Muslims living in poverty to pay tithes. That is why Islam asks us to seek a livelihood and boost income so that our tithe collection can accumulate," Dr Mahathir said.

The prime minister was speaking at the presentation of tithes by Bank Rakyat to 300 Kubang Pasu constituents at the Kampung Darat mosque near here today.

Dr Mahathir, who is also the Member of Parliament for Kubang Pasu, said he was convinced that Muslims were capable of boosting their income if they utilised their time and energy well.

Illustrating his point, the prime minister said padi growers for instance could use their spare time to earn extra by planting other cash crops and making handicrafts which are in high demand by foreign tourists.

"It saddens me to see foreign tourists buying handicrafts that are not locally made but imported from Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines.

"Why can't we produce our own handicrafts since we have the craftsmen for that," the prime minister said.

He said if only that Malaysians could seize available opportunities to boost their income, they could escape from poverty and pay tithes for use later to help other Muslims in difficulty.

"We should be proud of being able to pay tithes and help solve social problems of Muslims besides fostering closer ties among us," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said that the government had drawn up various programmes to help boost the people's income.

"The government will continue to assist the poor to earn extra and get out of the rut so that they do not have to depend on its aid forever," he added.

-- BERNAMA

MZM RYN