

15 JAN 2002
Mahathir-Aid
BE INDEPENDENT OF OTHERS, SAYS PM

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 15 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that the unfortunate including orphans in the country should strive to free themselves from always being dependant on others for a living.

He said that everyone in the country was responsible in determining their own well-being.

"We want Malaysians to be citizens who are a little too proud in terms of receiving aid.

"Instead, we shouldn't accept aid but strive to fend for ourselves," he said at the presentation of educational assistance to orphans in the Federal Territory, here.

Dr Mahathir said that depending too much on assistance would turn a person to one lacking initiative.

The prime minister also said that orphans receiving aid should not only be grateful for the assistance provided but should strive to show their appreciation by concentrating on their studies.

"They should not while away the time...they should study hard to attain the highest goal possible.

"In this way, they would be responsible for themselves and the assistance extended to them would not be in vain," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that equipped with knowledge, the orphans and those who were unfortunate, who were formerly recipients of aid, would be able to seek employment and earn a good income.

On achieving success, they could make contributions to help those who were in the same predicament as they were previously, he said.

The prime minister also said that he was happy over the generosity of organisations like the Muslim Orphans Welfare Association of the Kuala Lumpur Federal Territory which had organised the function.

He said that Muslims as well as non-Muslims had contributed to the association and therefore it was most appropriate that it too extends its assistance to non-Muslim orphans.

Through this move, he said, the non-Muslim orphans would remember the assistance extended to them by a Muslim welfare body while the Muslim orphans would remember that non-Muslims were among those who had extended assistance to them.

"As such, the spirit of solidarity can be promoted at an early stage," he said.

In Malaysia, he said, the society was multiracial, multicultural and multireligious and the various races reciprocate each other's kind gestures.

A total of 255 Muslim and non-Muslim orphans studying in several primary and secondary schools in the city received between RM150 and RM250 each.

The aid, totally RM76,200, was presented by Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali.

At the function, Dr Mahathir received contributions for the association from welfare bodies, companies and individuals.

The association's vice president, Tan Sri Mohamed Amin Osman, said that the association had provided educational assistance to orphans totalling RM1.2 million since it was set up in 1989.

He said that the assistance enabled many orphans to receive basic

education and some of them went on to pursue further studies in institutions of higher learning.

-- BERNAMA

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