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Mahathir-Workers

PM CRITICISES MALAYSIANS REFUSING TO SEIZE JOB OPPORTUNITIES

KERTIH, May 9 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today criticised Malaysians who refuse to seize employment opportunities in the rural areas and driving foreigners into filling job vacancies in the country.

He said that Malaysians especially Bumiputeras who would much rather loaf in the towns and cities had lead to foreigners coming to seize employment opportunities in the country.

Dr Mahathir said that foreigners were prepared to come from afar to seize employment opportunities irregardless whether they had to work in the urban or rural areas.

"Foreigners are prepared to come to work here. Only the locals refuse (to work)...they only want to have fun, loafing in the towns and cities.

"In this were to go on, soon others will take over our country," he told reporters after a one-day visit to the Petronas petroleum industry complex here.

He said that this had always been a problem since the colonial days when foreign labourers had to be brought in to work in the country because the people were not prepared to work and now they had become Malaysian citizens.

"If we are still not prepared to work, soon our country will be full of Indonesians, Filipinos, Thais and Bangladeshis. How are we going to chase them back...we are not prepared to work, so others take up the jobs," he said.

On the lack of investment in Kertih even though the petroleum industry was located there, Dr Mahathir said that the government had spent billions of ringgit to develop the area but the inflow of investment was minimal.

He said that the condition of the restaurants, houses and villages in Kertih remained the same whereas when the government built the KL International Airport (KLIA), investors make investments and new townships developed.

Similarly, he said, when the government opened up Putrajaya and Cyberjaya, new townships like Puchong and Serdang developed rapidly and there were various commercial and economic activities.

"What we see are only billions of ringgit of investment here, but there are no economic activities.

"The villages remained the same, so are the houses and the restaurants by the roadside also remained the same," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that the government found the situation in Kertih strange.

Asked to comment on plans by the Terengganu government to engage the services of a foreign firm to build its own stretch of the east coast highway, Dr Mahathir said that the federal government had no objections.

On whether the government was prepared to disburse the special payment for the highway project, the prime minister said that the government was prepared to consider the proposal, based on necessity, but the problem was that traffic flow was not sufficient for toll collection.

He said that the government had been disbursing the special payment for the benefit of the people in Terengganu.

"We are prepared to spend on any projects which will benefit the people of Terengganu," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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