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Salleh: Dr M's claim is mind-boggling

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BR1M: 'Nation has had aid schemes long before former PM took office'

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MALAYSIA has been providing its citizens with welfare assistance schemes similar to the 1Malaysia People's Aid (BR1M) long before former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad took office in 1981.

Communications and Multimedia Minister Datuk Seri Salleh Said Keruak said this in response to Dr Mahathir's remarks that BR1M was equivalent to corruption and, therefore, illegal.

Salleh said the allegation was "mind-boggling" as Dr Mahathir's *wang ehsan* (goodwill money) had financed Terengganu's welfare aid since 2000.

He said Dr Mahathir had made the "most astonishing statement", and it was clear that the latter's interpretation of corruption differed from that of other people.

"After implementing the *wang ehsan* and Terengganu aid programme in 2000, Dr Mahathir now turns around and condemns BR1M.

"Is he saying if the opposition comes to power, all aid and welfare programmes are going to be abolished?" Salleh said, adding that Dr Mahathir needed to make his point clear.

"How can you classify aid pro-

When other people receive aid, Dr Mahathir calls it corruption. **What about when his own family becomes rich, and his sons become millionaires? What do we call that?**

Datuk Seri Salleh Said Keruak
Communications and multimedia minister



grammes as corruption?

"Are tax deductions and rebates also corruption?

"What about *zakat* and *kebakikan* (welfare)?

"All these are forms of aid, just like BR1M.

"When other people receive aid, Dr Mahathir calls it corruption.

"What about when his own family becomes rich, and his sons become millionaires? What do we call that?"

"Dr Mahathir would not call BR1M corruption if it were his own family receiving it," wrote Salleh in a blog post yesterday.

Youth and Sports Minister Khairy Jamaluddin took to Twitter to comment on Dr Mahathir's remarks, calling them "absolute nonsense".

"This is absolute nonsense. Cash transfers (are) accepted (as an) economic programme around the world.

"And yet, people still believe this claptrap.

"And, the rejoinder from some

misguided Gen Y who weren't alive during his (Dr Mahathir's) time will be 'What do you know? You didn't build the twin towers'," said Khairy yesterday, adding that Dr Mahathir had described BR1M as a form of corruption numerous times.

Education Minister Datuk Seri Mahdzir Khalid said even the most developed countries implemented financial aid schemes to help its citizens, and Malaysia was no different.

He said it was the government's responsibility to ensure the wellbeing of the people, and there were various ways in which welfare schemes and programmes could be carried out.

"There were welfare programmes during his (Dr Mahathir's) time, and there still are now.

"BR1M is not corruption, it (Dr Mahathir's claim) is untrue."

Mahdzir said similar schemes were implemented in Australia, as well as European countries.