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INCONSISTENT

Ex-PM slammed for changing stand on BR1M

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PENAMPANG: Political leaders nationwide have roundly condemned Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad for making a U-turn on his stand against the Malaysia People's Aid (BRIM).

They said Dr Mahathir's about-turn showed that the former premier was inconsistent, and that he was acknowledging the benefit of the financial aid for the people.

Communications and Multimedia Minister Datuk Seri Salleh Said Keruak said BRIM was introduced because it was seen as the best way to alleviate the financial burden of poorer Malaysians.

"Dr Mahathir has changed his stance. Now, he said giving BRIM is okay. It shows they (the opposition) don't have a real stand — they simply criticise but do not see what was done was for the benefit of the people," he said.

Salleh said this when met at a Christmas open house here, co-organised by the Kadazan Dusun Cultural Association and St Michael's Church, and Penampang Umno and MCA.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Abdul Rahman Dahlan said Dr Mahathir's U-turn showed that the latter acknowledged BRIM's efficacy and popularity.

Rahman on his Twitter account hit out at Dr Mahathir for his turnaround statement on BRIM.

He said: "After relentlessly insulting the B40 (Bottom 40 per cent) group for accepting the 'bribe', now Tun says he will continue BRIM should the opposition win the 14th general election.

"Tun (Dr Mahathir) wants to make BRIM a statutory aid! From bribery to statutory aid! Amazing! #U-turn," he said yesterday.

Rahman said Dr Mahathir knew cash transfers such as BRIM were popular and effective, which caused him to make a U-turn on his previous stance.

"Tun (Dr Mahathir) and Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (PPBM) echo DAP's populist stance, to abolish GST (Goods and Services Tax) but then they promise they will introduce a new tax to replace it. Wow #U-turn again!" he said.

Rahman said many other countries, including opposition-led state governments in the country, had direct cash transfers to the poor.

United Pasokmomogun Kadazandusun Murut Organisation (Upko) secretary-general Datuk Donald Mojuntin said Dr Mahathir's latest statement meant that he agreed there was a need for BRIM.

"This is politics for you. The people (will) judge you. What you say today and what you say tomorrow, it had better be consistent. If it is not consistent, that shows the value of leadership you have.

"In this case, I think it is proven he did not mean what he (Dr Mahathir) said last time about BRIM. It's (the money) not much, but for a lot of families, it makes a lot of difference," he said.

MCA religious harmony bureau chairman Datuk Seri Ti Lian Ker

said Dr Mahathir was known as a politician who would shift the goal post whenever it suited him.

"Dr Mahathir had been consistently inconsistent. Over the years, he had shown that he will do an about-turn whenever it suits him.

"BRIM had proven to be a good product and for the benefit of the rakyat. This is proven by the fact that BRIM is now being supported by opposition politicians who previously criticised it."

MIC treasurer-general Datuk Seri S. Vell Paari said Dr Mahathir and the opposition must make their stand on BRIM clear.

"In less than three weeks, he (Dr Mahathir) has changed his stand drastically. This shows that Dr Mahathir and his advisers have accepted the fact that BRIM is not a form of corruption but a programme that is effective

in assisting the people of this country.

"In fact, more than 63 countries provide similar types of cash assistance to their needy citizens.

"This type of assistance has proven to be an effective tool in relieving the financial burden of over seven million Malaysians from the bottom 40 per cent income households."

Last month, Dr Mahathir issued a statement saying that the government was using BRIM as a form of political bribery to win elections.

However, during the launch of PPBM recently, Dr Mahathir said the opposition pact might continue rendering the financial assistance to the people should it win the 14th General Election.

Barisan Nasional Backbencher's Club chairman Tan Sri Shahrir Abdul Samad said Dr Mahathir might have lambasted BRIM in the past, but he was now singing a different tune as he saw the positive affects of its implementation.

"He now admits that BRIM is the best form of means to replace a blanket subsidy system with a subsidy given directly to a target group," Shahrir said and that Dr Mahathir's about-turn was an admission of his mistake in admonishing the handout that greatly benefits the needy.

"Dr Mahathir's questioning of how (BRIM) should be implemented is just to cover his previous mistake when he opposed BRIM," he said after handing out Chinese New Year aid to the needy at Dewan Sri Tebrau here.



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DATUK ABDUL RAHMAN DAHLAN
Minister in the Prime Minister's Department



Datuk Seri S. Vell Paari



Datuk Seri Salleh Said Keruak

