

Newspaper	THE STAR
Date	16 JANUARY 2017

Dr M ridiculed over BR1M

The star - 16/1/2017

Ex-premier's stand on making scheme a statutory aid draws contempt

By **RAHIMY RAHIM**

rahimyr@thestar.com.my

PETALING JAYA: Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has come under criticism for doing an about-turn on the 1Malaysia People's Aid (BR1M) scheme after he pledged to continue the financial assistance should Pakatan Harapan win the general election.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Abdul Rahman Dahlan said that after relentlessly insulting the bottom 40% income households (B40) for accepting the "bribe", he now vowed to continue with the aid.

Dr Mahathir, he said, had to change his stance because he knew that programmes like BR1M were popular and effective.

"Tun (Dr Mahathir) wants to make BR1M a statutory aid! From bribery to statutory aid! Amazing!

#U-Turn," he said on Twitter yesterday.

On Saturday, Dr Mahathir, the Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (PPBM) chairman, indicated that it would maintain BR1M but that it would be made into a statutory aid determined by law and the budget and not as part of the Opposition's manifesto.

This came just after he reportedly claimed in December that BR1M was a form of corruption and was illegal.

Abdul Rahman, who is Barisan Nasional strategic communications director, urged the Opposition to stop making BR1M an issue.

"DAP-Penang and PKR-Selangor governments have slew of freebies for their *rakyat*. Many other countries have direct cash transfers to their poor. So?

"So, Malaysians do hope that

Mahathir will stop making #U-Tun after this. (Yes, pun intended)," he wrote.

Communications and Multimedia Minister Datuk Seri Dr Salleh Said Keruak said BR1M was the correct measure taken by the Government to relieve the people's burden.

Umno supreme council member Datuk Seri Nazri Aziz said Dr Mahathir was forced to change his stance due to strong criticism from various groups, including Opposition parties.

"He must have felt the heat when he was criticised by Opposition leaders. He knows that his statements have brought negative implications to the Opposition and himself.

"I also believe that he has to change his views because he wants to win the general election," he said.

Umno supreme council member

Datuk Seri Irmohizam Ibrahim said the about turn showed that PPBM had no principles.

"We hope he will not just criticise the Government's policies just for the sake of criticising.

"As a responsible Government, Barisan is committed to continuing all policies promised in its manifesto," he said.

MIC treasurer-general Datuk Seri S. Vell Paari said Dr Mahathir's drastic change in stand showed that BR1M was not a form of corruption but an effective programme to help the people.

"Over 63 other 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 B40," he said.