

**Don't misjudge reasons behind rejection of BR1M cash aid, Dr Mahathir warns Putrajaya Malaysian Insider**  
**2 March 2014**  
**OLEH THE MALAYSIA INSIDER**

Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has again warned the Barisan Nasional (BN) today about its 1Malaysia People's Aid (BR1M) cash handout programme, after 17,000 Malaysians rejected the government's latest handout.

The country's longest serving prime minister advised BN against mistaking the message from those who had rejected BR1M and realise that not everybody was willing to accept the handout and be swayed to vote for BN.

"Failure to understand public sentiments would be disastrous for politicians. Self-delusion is even worse," Dr Mahathir said in his latest entry on his Chedet blog.

Second Finance Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Husni Hanadzlah had last week said that the 17,000 rejections were a sign of growing "maturity" among Malaysians.

Dr Mahathir has repeatedly criticised the BRIM programme and had in the past said it would not help arrest the decline in popularity with voters.

In July last year Dr Mahathir had told Umno mouthpiece Utusan Malaysia that BR1M had failed to reel in the votes for the BN in the 13th general election.

"Actually, what was given was not effective. For those who receive the aid, they were not thankful, especially opposition supporters who thought it was their own money anyway. That is tax money and not government money or BN's," he told Mingguan Malaysia, the Utusan's weekend edition.

Dr Mahathir contrasted the cash aid to his administration between 1981 and 2003.

"Previously, the government ensured an environment that facilitated society to find work, conduct business, investment and others that the people enjoyed. That wasn't government money but we created space and a suitable environment for people to make their livelihood.

"Now we see many including graduates who don't have a job yet. Maybe people feel that once they get the cash aid they will be satisfied but actually the money is not enough, it will just last a few days," the still-influential politician said.

BN has given two direct cash aid under the Bantuan Rakyat 1Malaysia (BR1M) plan and promised in their Election 2013 manifesto to give RM1,200 to families who earn less than RM3,000 a month.

Dr Mahathir said BRIM is costly for a Government facing deficits and shouldering huge debts. At RM500 per person for seven million people it would cost the Government RM3.5 billion. Increase that to RM1,200 the cost would be RM8.4 billion.

"That is a lot of money. Yet there are still a lot of very poor people in the country. Do we really need BRIM? Even without BRIM there was good support by the people.

"If they do not support it must be because they are not happy with something, maybe even with BRIM. Find out what they are not happy with and you will know what you should do," he wrote.  
- March 2, 2014.

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Source: <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/dont-misjudge-reasons-behind-rejection-of-financial-aid-dr-m-warns-putrajay>