

No national service: Dr M

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KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. — National service will not be introduced, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said the security situation did not call for the introduction of conscription.

"Even in the future, we feel there is no need for a population experienced in handling arms," he said.

Dr Mahathir was responding to a question during a Press conference at Defence Ministry headquarters.

He had earlier addressed an annual symposium of Armed Forces senior officers on Government po-

licies.

"Many people are worried about national service.

"At one time (before Merdeka), national service was introduced.

"Some people left the country to avoid being called up, while many others left after they had received military training.

Pay increase

"The Government then was forced to take steps to prevent these people from returning, and this caused dissatisfaction among some quarters.

"Some people, if trained under national service, could use their knowledge for undesirable acti-

vities."

On the economic recovery, Dr Mahathir said the Government would have to study whether it could, as a consequence, afford to give pay rises to the country's 800,000 civil servants.

He said in the Government's management of the country's finances, it had to bear in mind that it was the people's money that was being spent and that there should be sufficient funds for development.

Asked whether provisions for a pay rise were being worked into next year's Budget, he replied that it was up to the Finance Minister.