

# Avoid asking for pay rise, Mahathir tells civil servants

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By Wong Sai Wan

SEREMBAN, Fri. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has urged civil servants to live within their means and not to ask for pay rise just because oil prices are expected to increase due to the Gulf crisis.

He warned today that demand for more pay by the civil servants would bring about uncontrollable inflation.

"Our present inflation rate is hovering around 2.5 per cent which is negligible by world standards," he said at a dialogue with senior civil servants here.

He said pay increase for the civil servants would only mean an increase in the inflation rate because of the large number of government employees.

Dr Mahathir said the spiral inflation effect would make the pay in-

crease meaningless.

It was, therefore, better for the civil servants to live within their means, he added.

"Why worry if prices of non-essential goods increase? If you do not buy them, the shopkeepers and producers will have no choice but to bring the prices down," he said.

He reminded the civil servants that their spending had a great effect on the economy as there were 860,000 of them.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia was the fifth most successful developing country in the world.

"We are only behind Taiwan, South Korea, Hong Kong and Singapore. There are 130 countries which are listed as developing countries."

He said the country's success was due to the good interaction between the three branches of government — the elected representatives, administrators and judiciary.

He reminded the civil servants that theirs was an important role in the nation's development.

"It is important you understand and play your part. If the political powers set a policy, it is your duty to implement it even if you do not like it.

"We, the elected representatives, cannot govern this country on our own," he said.

Dr Mahathir said it was vital that the judiciary, although independent of the other branches, should be aware of the needs of the country.

"The judiciary makes decisions based on law but they must remember the needs of this country," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the freedom provided for within a democratic system should not be abused as this would only harm the development of the country.

He said a two-party system or a multi-party sys-

tem of 1,000 political parties did not guarantee the well-being of the country.

"The only thing that guarantees the continued development of the country is a big party elected to power with a huge majority.

"A marginal victory would cause instability and a government with a simple majority would be unable to function because it would be too afraid to offend anybody.

"Such a government would be afraid that if its policies are unpopular with only a small number of people, some of its members would cross over and thus bring down the government.

"We cannot afford such a situation in Malaysia if we want our country to continue to develop."

Dr Mahathir congratulated the civil servants on their efficiency and performances but said there was always room for further improvement.