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Drive to take charge of nation's destiny to be launched

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A NATIONAL drive aimed at allowing Malaysians to charge of their own destiny rather than submitting to external influences will be launched soon, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad says.

To be more specific than Vision 2020, the campaign will spell out the role of the people, including everyday practices, in contributing to development of the economy.

"We have identified weaknesses in several sectors and have formulated specific measures to overcome them.

"I am confident that with this campaign, Malaysians from all walks of life will know their role and what the Government is doing to ensure continued progress of the nation," he told reporters after launching the Malaysian Truck and Buses Complex in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Asked when the drive will be launched, Dr Mahathir said: "As soon as possible."

He said since June this year the economy has been forced to react to outside influences which threaten to jeopardise some of the country's plans.

"Every time the ringgit weakens against the dollar, we face problems and have to spend time, money and energy to restore the economy.

"We have to depend on them (external forces) to stop their actions... some of our plans cannot be implemented because of the weakening of the ringgit. We cannot let this continue. We need to take charge of the management and development of our country.

"We want to be able to determine the destiny of our country, but at this time it seems like we are only reacting. We need to shield ourselves from attacks and this can be done if we move and act in an organised manner," Dr Mahathir said.

The people cannot afford to be selfish. Instead, national interest must come first and they have to show a lot of self-discipline, he added.

The Prime Minister reminded Malaysians that individual prosperity depends on the collective progress of the nation and if they place importance only on their own success, they will eventually end up the losers.

"The plan we will implement involves all Malaysians, all levels, all fields... whether he is an owner of a big corporation, a manager, worker, labourer or petty trader... everybody will be part of the drive to put the power of national development back in our own hands," he said.

Earlier, the Prime Minister launched "Perkasa", the national truck, built by DRB-Hicom subsidiary Malaysian Truck and Bus Sdn Bhd in Pekan.

He called on DRM-Hicom to speed up the local content programme, and raise it to 80 per cent from 70 per cent currently in less than the originally planned five years as part of efforts to reduce imports.

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