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Economy: Diplomats urged to play part

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - Malaysian diplomatic missions abroad have been asked to explain to the international community the Government's efforts to strengthen the nation's economic situation.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today his Ministry had issued a circular to these missions on the current economic situation and the Government's commitment to overcome the problem.

The circular is for civil servants, corporate entities, association leaders, including Malaysian friendship associations, and Malaysian citizens.

"We have explained our intention to defend the country from elements that can weaken our economy.

"We have also stressed that we still welcome all foreign direct investments and want them to continue such economic ties," he said after handing over the Malaysian flag to the Silverstone TransAfrica 4X4 Expedition team at Wisma Putra.

The event, sponsored by Silverstone Bhd, will take 55 participants along a 17,000km route through 12 countries over 33 days.

The expedition is under the patronage of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad. South African President Nelson Mandela will flag off the rally at Cape Town on Monday. It ends in Cairo, Egypt.

On the Malaysian Technical Co-operation Programme, Abdullah said it would continue to be implemented without any change in objectives despite the on-going cost-cutting exercise.

"We will try our very best to ensure that the programme is implemented in full when the economic situation recovers fully."

Abdullah also announced the setting up of a unit under its administrative officers today to curb excessive spending.

The unit will handle property maintenance, ensure the well-being of the Ministry's equipment and curb wastage of stationery.

Abdullah also appealed to Malaysian representatives abroad to postpone all construction projects of new embassy buildings if such contracts had not been awarded.

"We have to put such plans on hold to minimise spending," he added.

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