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Abdullah-embassies

EMBASSIES TO EXPLAIN ECONOMIC CONSOLIDATION, SAYS ABDULLAH

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 26 (Bernama) -- All Malaysian diplomatic missions abroad have been directed to enlighten host countries and their private sectors on Malaysia's efforts towards recovery from current economic woes, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today.

Wisma Putra has issued a circular to the embassies asking them to explain the government's moves to overcome currency and stock market setbacks and at strengthening the economy, he said.

Speaking to reporters here after handing over the Malaysian flag to participants of the Silverstone TransAfrica 4X4 Expedition, he said the government would also explain to other countries that Malaysia still needed and encouraged foreign direct investments.

Explanation was important so that countries having diplomatic ties with Malaysia could understand national and government policies in handling the economic setbacks, he said.

The embassies would also explain how the current economic situation could affect assistance provided to other developing countries under the Malaysian Technical Cooperation programme, he said.

Abdullah said Wisma Putra had taken immediate steps to reduce the ministry's operating and other expenditures including deferring construction of new embassy buildings.

He said one of the deferred projects was the new Malaysian embassy building in Washington.

Projects for which agreements had been signed could proceed as scheduled.

Wisma Putra's expenditure cutbacks were in line with the government's call for a two per cent reduction in its spending in the wake of the current economic problems.

Meanwhile, the Malaysian team leaves for Cape Town tomorrow to participate in the 33-day expedition over a 17,000-km route across 12 African countries beginning Dec 1.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is patron of the international expedition, organised by Silverstone (M) Sdn Bhd.

The expedition starts in Cape Town passing through Botswana, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan before ending in Cairo. -- BERNAMA

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