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Govt has been using open tender system all along, says PM

Kamarul Yunus

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the Government has always been practising an open or competitive tender system on awarding of contracts for government projects.

"We have the open tender system for quite sometime. But in certain situations, like when there is a need to speed up the process, we will use a selected tender system," he told reporters after launching a three-year road safety campaign for motorcyclists and pillion riders in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Dr Mahathir was asked to comment on news reports yesterday quoting Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu that he will propose that all contracts for government projects be awarded through the open or competitive tenders in line with the Cabinet's decision to reduce government expenditure.

Samy Vellu had said that to ensure the best price is obtained, he will propose to the Cabinet to do away with the negotiated tender system whereby only contractors approved and registered with Treasury are selected to negotiate on the tender price of government projects.

Dr Mahathir reiterated that the selected tender system was used to speed up the process of awarding the contracts.

"Nevertheless, everyone has the opportunity to bid for contracts," he added.

On his meeting with the Menteri Besar and Chief Ministers on Wednesday, Dr Mahathir said he was only seeking for full cooperation from all state governments to assist the Federal Government to strengthen the country's economy.

"I just asked for cooperation from them (Menteri Besar and Chief Ministers)," he said, while not dismissing that certain states are not following the Federal Government's call for scaling back programmes considered extravagant such as on overseas expenditure.

For example, Dr Mahathir said sometimes, the state governments, to the extent even the local authorities, organised an unnecessary large-scale delegation overseas.

"This means that we will be spending substantially and a substantial amount of our money will flow out of the country. If the delegation comprise three or four people, then it is alright," he added.

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