

08/10/1997

Leaders express full confidence in Dr M's leadership

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat today joined several other State Government leaders in expressing their confidence in Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's ability to overcome the economic situation.

In Kota Baru, Nik Aziz told reporters at his office that the problem could be resolved and there was no reason for anyone to demand Dr Mahathir's resignation simply because of the ringgit depreciation and the fall in the stock market.

"Dr Mahathir is not at fault because the depreciation of the currency is not faced by Malaysia alone but also the rest of the Southeast Asian nations," he said when asked to comment on reports by the foreign media which tried to discredit the Prime Minister and suggesting that he resign from office.

However, Dr Mahathir said yesterday that he has no plans to resign and the problem facing the country, brought about by the currency crisis, could be overcome.

Nik Aziz said a Prime Minister should only resign if he was involved in corruption or has absconded with the nation's wealth for his own interest.

He also said the Federal Government should exercise judicious spending and stop all mega projects under the present circumstances.

He added that the Federal Government should consider abolishing the Federal Development Office in the State and delegate the latter's task to the State Government.

The MIC, meanwhile, pledged its full support to Dr Mahathir, particularly in overcoming the economic problems faced by the country.

In a resolution tabled at the party's central working committee's meeting held in Kuala Lumpur, MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said it also supported the Prime Minister's call to the nation to face this temporary setback with courage and discipline and to avoid panic.

Samy Vellu said the party would call on its 430,000 members to mobilise themselves and increase productivity, as loyal citizens.

He also appealed to all Malaysians to be vigilant against external forces which wanted to destroy the unity, stability and economy of the nation.

In Ipoh, Menteri Besar Tan Sri Ramli Ngah Talib said the State Government and the people of Perak would fully back Dr Mahathir in his effort to steer the country out of its crisis.

"We are confident that he can address the problems affecting the nation," he said.

He added that Perak would help out by going on an austerity drive, starting with the public sector.

In Kota Kinabalu, Chief Minister Datuk Yong Teck Lee said a strong leadership was needed to overcome the currency problem and that such leadership was only available in the Prime Minister.

"We are confident in the leadership of Dr Mahathir in overcoming challenges facing the country at the moment.

"If our leadership is weakened, it will become more difficult for us to overcome the crisis," he said at a Press conference after opening a seminar on Quality, Safety and Environmental Management for Accelerated Industrialisation and a short course on Consumer Chemistry for Teachers at the Promenade Hotel today.

In Kuching, Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu, the backbone of the ruling Sarawak Barisan Nasional, as well as the Sarawak United People's Party and Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak have urged Dr Mahathir to continue leading the nation.

PBB president Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud said PBB was proud of the Prime Minister's courage in protecting the interest of the country and the developing world and fully supported Dr Mahathir's efforts to overcome the currency and stock market problems.

Taib, who is also Sarawak Chief Minister, said this in a two-paragraph letter addressed to Dr Mahathir.

Copies of the letter, dated today, were faxed to the Press through the State Information Department.

The letter reads: "On behalf of Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu, I would like to reiterate our wholehearted support to you in your efforts to overcome the currency problems being faced by Malaysia and in your efforts to fight adverse trends that has been forced onto our share markets.

"I am also being asked to convey our full confidence in your leadership to carry the Government and the people of Malaysia to continue working for the attainment of Wawasan 2020. We are very proud of your undaunted courage in protecting the interest of Malaysia and the developing world."

SUPP chairman Datuk Dr George Chan Hong Nam described the problems facing Malaysia as a "little strain" which Malaysians could overcome.

"This is the time when the whole country must stand behind the leadership of Dr Mahathir and his deputy Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim," said Dr Chan, who is also deputy Chief Minister, at a joint venture signing agreement ceremony between Ecozyme (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd and Mason Technologies Pty Ltd (Western Australia).

Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak president Datuk Leo Moggie said in a statement that the party pledged support for Dr Mahathir and his efforts to counter the country's currency crisis.

It supported Anwar's move in dispelling negative statements by the foreign media.

The party pledged its support for Dr Mahathir and Anwar at its supreme council meeting on Saturday.

The Malaysian Association of Youth Clubs and the United Kingdom Malay Union have also expressed their support for Dr Mahathir's efforts in building the nation's economy.

In Malacca, the State Farmers' Organisation chairman Senator Abdul Majid Baba said Malaysians have their own stand towards determining its present crop of leaders, and needed no intervention from speculators or the foreign media.

"Therefore, the speculators and foreign journalists should not meddle in Malaysia's affair," he said.

The Malacca Writers Association head Othman Mohamad said the association supported the strong stand made by Dr Mahathir while Malacca Youth Council chairman Md Sirat Abu said Dr Mahathir should not succumb to foreign pressures.

In Muar, the Parit Jawa Fishermen's Association has expressed its support for Dr Mahathir's efforts in overcoming the problems affecting the country.

Its secretary Yap Ee Tiam said about 2,000 members have pledged to support the Government.

(END)