

18 AUG 1997

Mahathir-economy

MAHATHIR DISPELS NOTION OF OVERHEATING ECONOMY

KOTA KINABALU, Aug 18 (Bernama) -- Prime minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has dispelled notions attributing the current state of Malaysian economy, including the decline in the value of the ringgit, to an "overheating economy".

"I only cynically touched on "overheated economy".I myself don't believe in the economy overheating. As such notions of an overheating economy are baseless," he said.

What had happened was that certain parties tried to undermine the nation's economy, he said at an airport press conference here at the end of his two-day visit to Sabah.

The prime minister has already arrived in Miri to begin a two-day visit to Sarawak.

"What is clear, they are frustrated we did not listen to their advice to slow down our economic growth.Subsequently they resorted to irresponsible acts to curtail our economic performance," he said.

He urged parties scheming to weaken the country's economy not to question the Malaysian economy since they knew nothing about the country,

"By right they should only worry about their own countries. They are ignorant of Malaysia. They can write articles (about Malaysia) but they don't have any practical experience whatsoever in running the country like we do," he said.

Asked whether he was also referring to the foreign press, the prime minister said in lighter vein,: "They are foreign press, (the) local press cannot (do that)... because according to the foreign press, local press is completely under the government control."

On whether last Saturday's promotion of parliamentary secretaries Datuk Hishamuddin Tun Hussein and Datuk Fauzi Abdul Rahman to deputy ministers was a signal of an impending cabinet reshuffle, Dr Mahathir said anyone could speculate on a cabinet reshuffle.

"I'm waiting for the advice from the press. But I cannot reshuffle merely to satisfy the press," he said in jest.

On graft, he said:"In Malaysia we believe in handling problems early before they have taken roots. So I advised repeatedly because of the need to take action now, otherwise it will be very difficult to break something that has solidified."

He said the press too have a role in getting rid of corruption by exposing it to the public.

But, he said, the media should be fair and not to prejudge a person until there was real evidence of that person's involvement in graft.

At the end of the press conference Dr Mahathir was asked on his appraisal of his deputy Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's performance during his recent two months leave abroad from last May 19.

The prime minister had reportedly said in jest earlier that he had a report card to mark Anwar's performance.

Replying to the question Dr Mahathir said: "Well, jokingly I would have said his performance has been very good. Did you have any problem? It's up to you to make your judgement and up to me to make my judgement." --

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