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Mahathir-Wastage

NO WASTAGE BY GOVT, SAYS MAHATHIR

KEMAMAN, Oct 11 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the government had never tolerated any wastage in the planning and implementation of development projects particularly involving mega projects.

The Prime Minister said criticisms by foreigners particularly by those responsible for the fall of the ringgit that the Malaysian government implemented luxury projects causing the country to shoulder a heavy burden was actually not true.

" We are criticised for carrying out too many mega projects which they say are not beneficial to us and will ruin our economy but actually what they did had jeopardised our economy," he told reporters after opening the Terengganu Advanced Technical Institute here today.

He said previously the government could implement big projects like the Bakun hydro-electric project in Sarawak but as a result of their manipulations which led to the ringgit depreciation, had rendered the government unable to carry out the projects.

Dr Mahathir said allegations of wastage by the government had never occurred but instead it was due to the currency manipulations which had actually made the country poorer to the extent of affecting development projects for the people.

" We will not condone wastage. We are not making statues of Dr Mahathir or of other past prime ministers... other countries build statues, monuments and many other things to commemorate the contributions of their elders but we don't do all that," he said.

Asked on the government's austerity drive like the use of Proton Perdana cars by ministers instead of imported cars, Dr Mahathir said the practice should be continued even after the country's economy recovered.

He said the practice of using cars produced in their own country was also adopted by leaders of foreign countries which he had visited including to France recently.

" By right, we must be proud of our own car. I myself use Proton Perdana although I have other cars which were bought much earlier," he said.

On the doubts by certain parties on his working visits to foreign countries at a time when the government was enforcing the austerity drive, Dr Mahathir defended his oversea trips.

" I go overseas not for holidays. I don't even have one second to rest. In my free time, I do office work. In fact, all my officers who follow me have to work non-stop," he added. -- BERNAMA

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