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Mahathir-Projects

STUDY ON NEW PROJECTS TO LOOK AT IMPORT IMPLICATIONS

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 6 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the government has deferred the implementation of new projects to study their implications on the economy in the wake of the depreciating Ringgit.

"We are studying all new projects to see their implications in terms of imports," he said in response to a question on what other new projects needed to be put off temporarily due to the current currency problem.

Last Thursday Dr Mahathir announced that three big projects had been delayed in their implementation due to the Ringgit problem. The projects are the RM13.6 billion Bakun hydro-electric dam project in Sarawak, the Kuala Lumpur Linear City project here and the northern region international airport project in Kuala Muda, Kedah.

Asked whether the other new projects to be deferred had been announced, he said: "Not yet, we have many infrastructural projects like roads, expressways and others to reduce congestion in the cities, for example."

He said the government would give the approval only if it felt sure that the country would not be burdened with imports.

Asked whether the implementation of the new government administrative centre project in Putrajaya would be affected, Dr Mahathir said Putrajaya was to be developed in stages.

"Putrajaya will not be built in a day because all these projects take time, we do it when we have the money, if we don't have the money, we won't," he said.

On whether the highlands project would be deferred too, he said that at the moment the government had not received the environmental impact assessment report.

"We will have to wait, we are very patient you know," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said that he was not satisfied with the local content in infrastructural projects.

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Dr Mahathir also said that he was not satisfied with the local content in infrastructural projects.

"That's why we are looking into this. Everyone said they need new tractors, excavators, and all that, now we want to reduce (new imports) to the minimum," he said.

Asked the extent of the reduction, he said: "If we cannot (achieve) 100 per cent, then 99 per cent."

On the implementation of the Kuala Lumpur international airport project in Sepang, Dr Mahathir said this was an important project because it would contribute to the country's economic expansion.

He said that with the reserve land at the new site, the airport could cater for expansion for the next 50 years. -- BERNAMA

ARA JK