

# PM: Unity will help us recover

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By MUGUNTAN VANAR and  
RUBEN SARIO

LABUAN: The Prime Minister said yesterday that Malaysia will do it "our own way" to lift the country out of the economic downturn.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said this could be done with the support of the people and without begging for foreign aid.

He said he was confident the economic problems could be overcome if Malaysians continued to preserve unity and

stability in the country.

They should give full support to the Government's economic recovery efforts and not give in to attempts by certain quarters to incite racial tension, he said.

"Don't spread malicious rumours, don't resort to riots, let us avoid doing all this. Instead let us preserve the calm in our country," he told a meet-the-people gathering in this international financial offshore centre.

Dr Mahathir said it was the responsibility of everyone to

ensure there was no racial misunderstanding in the country and protect it from outside interferences.

Outlining what was required, he said that in a multi-racial country, the people must continuously strengthen the good working relationship between the various communities.

"If we have problems, we discuss it," Dr Mahathir added.

He said people must preserve peace and harmony and should not fall prey to rumours like in the recent incident over

the Internet.

"This way the Government will be able to concentrate and handle the economic situation," he said.

He said the National Economic Action Council was implementing strategic plans in stages for a quick recovery.

Criticising the currency speculators and the foreign media, he said he hoped the people would not be influenced by outsiders.

Dr Mahathir said the foreign media was covering up the activities of currency traders by

putting the blame for the economic turmoil on Asian governments.

He said they claimed the problems in East Asia came about because the governments were corrupt and practised cronyism and nepotism.

He said the foreigners had large sums of money and controlled the foreign media, "so much so when currency traders commit a crime, their media will cover it up for them."

Dr Mahathir said people in some affected Asian countries had been influenced by these

reports and had forced changes to their governments.

He said the foreigners were trying to influence Malaysians and their media repeatedly censored what "we have to say."

He reiterated that the current problems caused by the depreciation of the ringgit was due to the actions of currency speculators.

Dr Mahathir is on a three-day visit to Labuan and Sabah as part of his nationwide tour to explain the economic situation.