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`Betrayers who work with external forces'

DATUK Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday branded as betrayers Malaysians who collaborated with external forces to smear the country's image and destroy its economy.

"Loyal Malaysians will not collaborate with these people. Malaysians who collaborate with these people, who seek help from our enemies have certainly betrayed the nation," he said.

Dr Mahathir was referring to the actions of currency traders, short-term investors in the Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange, rating agencies such as Moody's as well as Standard and Poor's and the Western media which clearly indicated that they wanted to destroy Malaysia's economy so that it would be forced to follow their dictates.

"Are they patriots when they go to other countries to tarnish the image of their own country, to obtain support from people who look down on the nation's legal process and independence?"

"We should compare these collaborators with the rakyat who have contributed to the Dana Khas Negara that to date has collected RM34.8 million.

"This amount is not substantial compared to the billions that will be required to revitalise the economy. But it reflects the loyalty, the sense of responsibility and the patriotism of the rakyat of Malaysia.

"On behalf of the Government, I would like to say a big thank you."

Dr Mahathir said Malaysians of all races and religions demonstrated their patriotism in the 1998 Commonwealth Games which ended on Sept 21.

"Unfortunately, there were some quarters that attempted to show foreign visitors and media that Malaysia was not as peaceful as reflected in Sukom.

"The demonstrations that were held were aimed at instigating the police so that they would react firmly to enforce the law. This then gave the foreign media the opportunity to broadcast repeatedly on television Malaysia's apparent negative points.

"The foreign media used the footages of the protests and demonstrations in this beloved country of ours 24 hours a day and every day," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the aim of the foreign media who were supported by certain quarters in the country was to make the world look down on Malaysia.

He said they also wanted to discourage tourists and foreign traders from coming to Malaysia, causing hotels, shops and small and big traders to lose money.

"In that way, our economic recovery will be even more difficult to achieve and confusion may reign."

Dr Mahathir said those who felt that the leadership of the country should be changed should do so through the electoral process.

"In this country, unlike in some other countries, the opposition party is free to stand for elections and form the government," he said.

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