

15 OCT 1998

DIFFICULT TO PAY BONUS THIS YEAR, SAYS MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 15 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today it is difficult for the government to pay bonus to civil servants this year in view of the country's current economic situation.

"The country will have a big deficit budget next year, so it is difficult for the government to consider bonus," the prime minister said.

"As we all know, we had paid (bonus) because the government's revenue had been excessive or extraordinary," he told reporters after chairing a pre-council meeting with Barisan Nasional representatives for the upcoming Dewan Rakyat and Dewan Negara sittings, at Parliament House, here.

He said civil servants had been paid bonus according to this principle in the past.

He said everyone must be prepared to tighten their belt now.

"We will recover, God willing," he added.

Parliament will sit from Tuesday until Dec 10 and the budget for next year will be tabled on Friday.

-- BERNAMA

RAZ MAM JK