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Mahathir - economy

GOVT MAY INTRODUCE DRASTIC RECOVERY MEASURES, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

KOTA KINABALU, Aug 15 (Bernama) -- The government may introduce measures which may appear drastic in its effort to bring about economic recovery, the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The proposed measures could raise apprehension among the people and prompt them to question whether the impending moves would be helpful, he said.

Notwithstanding that the people may have doubts and suspicion over the proposed measures, they should have faith that the proposed measures are meant for the nation's and their own good, he said.

"Have faith in the government. Each time we want to adopt an approach we'll study it in depth first," he said addressing a meet-the-people rally at the multi-purpose hall of the Likas sports complex here.

Dr Mahathir said all measures undertaken by the government and designed to bring about economic recovery would be fruitful only if the people give full support.

Dr Mahathir said the government had already introduced several measures and approaches, including the establishment of the National Economic Action Council, to deal with the current economic problems.

"But we'll not just end here. Much more have to be done," he said.

More than 10,000 people, including leaders of the governing Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition, attended the rally organised by the Sabah Umno Liaison Committee.

Dr Mahathir, who is also BN chairman and Umno president, said government policies or approaches were never meant to bring hardships to the people.

It would only draw up sound plans for the people whose undivided support was crucial for their successful implementation, he said.

The prime minister said speculative raids by currency traders on the ringgit have not been much of a pressure on the people although the attack on the currency remained the country's main problem.

The government's policies and approaches in dealing with such a situation had considerably sheltered the people from the heat of the raids by the currency traders, he said.

As an aftermath of their actions, the government now had limited resources to finance development projects and had to defer many of them, he said.

Dr Mahathir also explained to the rally that major projects like the KL International Airpor (KLIA) were financed by internal resources.

"All the funding come from us. We aspire to be an industrialised nation by year 2020.

"What's wrong with us having such an ambition? This is not a burden for the foreigners, it's our dream. We can turn that dream into reality through our own efforts," he said to a thunderous applause from the crowd which thronged the complex from as early as 7 am.

Dr Mahathir also explained to the rally about a foreign conspiracy out to destroy the economy and topple the national leadership.

He said it was clear that parties behind the conspiracy had failed in their attempt to change the leadership of the country.

"With the people's support, we can still stand tall and preserve the national sovereignty and dignity," said the prime minister.

Dr Mahathir concluded his speech by appealing to the people to fully

support the government in its handling of the economic problems.

"We can do it , Malaysia can do it and Sabah can do it," he added.

Meanwhile, at speaking at an airport press conferece at the end of his visit to Sabah, Dr Mahathir, when asked to elaborate on the proposed drastic measures, said he raised the matter to get the people mentally prepared.

He said the government may be introducing moves or approaches for which the people may not be ready to accept.

"We may not do it (introduce the proposed measures). But we have to prepare the mind of the "rakyat," he said.

The prime minister said he made the statement on the proposed measures which may appear drastic because the government may make decisions which can jolt the people.

Asked further whether the government was drawing up the proposed drastic measures, Dr Mahathir said: "At this time, there is no plan."

Asked if the recent police action against cyber rumour-mongers would defeat the country's Information Technology (IT) development, Dr Mahathir said it would not be affected in any way.

Dr Mahathir said by taking action against Internet rumour-mongering, the development of IT would in fact be even better.

"It is because of these people, the development of IT will be hampered," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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