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PM: World recession if situation persists

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KUCHING, Thurs. - Saying that the economic problems of developing countries had started to take their toll on other countries including the developed ones, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today predicted a world recession if the situation persisted.

The Prime Minister said that US companies had started to feel the pinch following the attacks by speculators on currencies of East Asian countries.

He said that even companies like Boeing Aircraft Corporation, which produces aircraft, were having difficulties selling their products.

Speaking to a huge crowd at Stadium Perpaduan here, Dr Mahathir said that since the country's wealth had been snatched away, "we not only cannot purchase their aircraft, we are forced to dispose of some of those we already have."

The Prime Minister warned currency speculators that the more they suppressed the economy of East Asia, the more pressure they would feel on themselves.

"Soon we may see a world recession. Then they will know who caused our inability to purchase their products," he said to loud applause by the crowd.

He said at that time, they (US) would probably admit that the currency speculators, including George Soros, were actually rogues and "will throw them behind bars."

Dr Mahathir said it was very unfair for these currency speculators to "steal our money" since "we have done nothing to them."

"Our money is our right. We do not use their money to develop our country. So, we will fight ... all of you and I.

"I do not know whether we can win or not, but we will certainly fight. We can because Malaysians are united and we strongly support the Government," he said as the crowd cheered.

The Prime Minister said that no Government, no matter how wise it was, could manage the country without the people's support.

He said he had gone round to every State to explain to the people the economic problems and efforts being taken to overcome them because he realised that to fight their enemies, the people must understand the actual situation.

"We cannot fight an invisible enemy and cannot fight what we do not understand," he added.

Expressing his confidence in the people's undivided support for the Government's efforts to revive the economy, Dr Mahathir urged the people to be united, refrain from actions that could weaken efforts to overcome the economic problem like strikes, and be wise in their spending, buying only local products wherever possible.

At the function, Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud presented a mock cheque for RM2 billion, donated by the State Government and individuals to the National Special Fund.

Also present were Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, former deputy Prime Minister Tun Ghafar Baba, several Federal and State ministers, MPs and assemblymen.

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