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Mahathir-Administration

MAHATHIR DENIES CURRENT ECONOMIC PROBLEM DUE TO INEFFICIENCY

JITRA, Jan 23 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today denied claims by developed countries that the current economic problem faced by Malaysia was due to inefficiency of the country's administration.

He said that actually developed countries concerned were experiencing far worst administrative inefficiency than Malaysia.

The truth was the problems of corruption, favouritism, budget deficit, poverty and unemployment were worse in some of these countries than in Malaysia, he said.

"The reason given that the depreciation of the currency was due poor government was nothing but excuses," he said when opening the new building of Tenaga Nasional Berhad (TNB) here.

He said those who profited from the depreciation of Malaysian currency were responsible for making the poor more poor in this country.

He said there were corruption in the country but it was not as bad as in some countries in the west to the extent of jeopardising national development.

"There are elected representatives in developed countries demanding money from the people in order to bring their problem in Parliament," he said.

On favouritism, Dr Mahathir said they claimed there was no such thing but Malaysia knew that they were doing it.

For example, he said a leader from developed country wrote to him asking that a company from his country be awarded the government's contract.

Dr Mahathir said actually developed countries were experiencing more financial problem than Malaysia with some of them recording budget deficit of US\$5 trillion (RM17 trillion).

He said condition in developed countries were worse than in Malaysia where some people slept on the road and on benches, some even died due to the cold.

In Malaysia, he said the poor now accounted about seven per cent of the population compared to about 50 per cent in 1970.

The government was always looking after the welfare of the poor, enhancing their standard of living through programmes such as the Development of the Hardcore Poor which provided them housing, he said.

In Europe, he said 20 per cent of the population were unemployed and depended on government's assistance while in Malaysia, it was full employment and even had to bring in another 1.7 million foreign workers to meet labour shortage.

Dr Mahathir invited the people to compare progress made under the colonial rule and under the present administration since gaining independence 41 years ago.

Malaysia, he said he made extraordinary progress during these years without financial support and expertise from developed countries.

"Rarely did we seek assistance from foreign expertise. We trained our own people until they were capable of achieving the progress we now enjoy," he said.

He said the government would not allow the country to be colonised again in whatever forms.

Following the depreciation of the ringgit, he said there were attempts to incite the people to change the country's leadership.

He said the people must be wary of such attempts by those who initially wanted to control the country's economy and then interfering in national politics. --BERNAMA

JM/MZM ABG