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PM lauds trade unions' continuous support

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KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has praised trade unions for their continuous efforts in helping the Government overcome the economic problems.

"The Government is very proud that at a time when the country is facing economic problems, the unions have been together with us in trying to overcome them," he said today in his Workers' Day message.

Dr Mahathir paid tribute to the workers and their unions for understanding the economic problems and not resorting to industrial action which would have worsened the situation.

"They are united, disciplined and responsible in facing the situation," he said.

He said the trade unions also deserved praise for understanding that the current economic problems were caused by external forces.

"The fall in the value of the ringgit and share prices, deliberately caused by foreign speculators, has resulted in the current economic problems," he said.

Dr Mahathir said it was important for the workers to realise that there were subtle attempts by external forces to recolonise the country.

"This time, they are not using military or political power to colonise us. They are now using economic might," he said.

The Prime Minister said pressure was continuously being applied on weaker nations in the region although the value of their currencies and stocks had fallen.

"Many of their businesses were forced to close and many of their workers forced out of their jobs," he said. "Certainly, we do not want this to happen in our country."

Dr Mahathir said the Government was making every effort to overcome the current economic problems.

Steps were being taken to revive and revitalise the national economy, he said.

Various measures had been taken to improve the financial system including providing credit facilities to boost national economic activities, he said.

Dr Mahathir said the Government had also taken other measures, including reducing imports and increasing exports, enhancing productivity, encouraging the purchase and use of Malaysian products as well as improving the quality of local goods.

The Prime Minister urged workers to be patient in facing the current economic situation and to make sacrifices to expedite the economy's recovery.

"We have to accept the fact that government expenditure has to be reduced as a result of the economic problems," he said. "We have to make sacrifices to ensure that the country will continue to develop."

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