

28/08/1998

`Projects not for showing off but for the people'

KUCHING, Thurs. - The Government has no intention of implementing projects just to show off or to incur wastage, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said whatever projects, no matter how big, were for the benefit of the people and the country.

"Malaysians are not people who like wastage. If we want to be wasteful, we might as well build statues of our leaders... the thing we do not do in this country," he said when launching the Sarawak River Regulation Scheme in Pending near here.

Dr Mahathir said while it was true that the Government had built beautiful projects, they were all meant to benefit the people and the country.

"Not only do we get satisfaction out of these beautiful projects, but are also able to attract more people to our country," he added.

He said certain parties had expressed doubts as to whether "Malaysia could be saved" in view of the economic problems, but the launching of the project today and Perodua Kembara on Monday were testimony of Malaysia's capability in managing its economy.

He said Malaysia had a "big ambition", that is to become a developed country by the year 2020, and would work relentlessly towards it.

"By right, there should not have been obstacles (to our Vision 2020 objectives), but yet there are attempts to obstruct our Wawasan (Vision) by attacking our currency and share market."

The Prime Minister said with strong support of the people, the Government was confident it would overcome the problems and revive the economy.

He said the people must always be grateful to the gifts of God, including rivers and the environment, by co-operating with the authorities concerned to safeguard their cleanliness and not polluting them.

"We will be very ungrateful if we do not value these gifts," he said, adding the habit of turning rivers into dumping sites should stop.

Dr Mahathir also spoke of allegations that Malaysia was felling trees from the forests indiscriminately.

Saying that such allegations were misleading, he said unlike some Western countries, Malaysia ensured that the felling of trees was done systematically, taking animal sanctuaries and other aspects into consideration.

"In one country I visited, from the helicopter I saw black bears running in all directions because they had no place for shelter as the jungle areas had been cleared," he said.

Also present were Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud, Agriculture Minister Datuk Dr Sulaiman Daud and Energy, Telecommunications and Posts Minister Datuk Leo Moggie.

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