

08 JAN 1998

Mahathir-Spend

SPEND IF YOU WANT TO BUT BUY MALAYSIAN- MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 8 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the government does not mind if people with excess money want to spend but they should buy Malaysian goods.

Traders would go out of business if people do not spend at all, he said.

"There must be some understanding about this," he told reporters after launching the Anti-Corruption Agency (ACA)-initiated campaign to consolidate integrity in the government machinery at the ACA headquarters here.

Dr Mahathir said what the government wanted was for the people to spend wisely by buying Malaysian products.

"What we are saying is that you spend money on Malaysian products... Malaysian goods in Malaysia," the Prime Minister said.

He said this when asked for his views on reports that Malaysians were still spending lavishly even after they had been urged not to do so in view of the current economic situation.

The Prime Minister said if Malaysians had excess money, they could spend it but not on foreign goods.

"When they go for foreign products, that's when the problem arises... If people don't spend, then the business will die," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that people would face problems if they spent beyond their means.

Asked whether the shortage of sugar in the market as reported by several newspapers was due to the early announcement on the increase in sugar price, Dr Mahathir said the source of the problem was the newspaper reports.

People started to buy sugar in large quantities after reading in the local papers that shops were running out of sugar.

"Every day we talk about sugar and we take pictures to show there is no sugar in shops and so people rush to buy sugar," he added. -- BERNAMA

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