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PM: Singapore too acted without giving warning

LANGKAWI, Fri. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said Singapore had also been taking action without giving Malaysia fair warning.

Commenting on Singapore's claim that Malaysia had violated an agreement which required it to give advance notice before it could bar Singapore Air Force planes from entering Malaysian airspace without clearance, Dr Mahathir said: "When they take action, they never give us time also ... (it is the) same.

"It is not difficult for them to fly somewhere else ... the sea is very wide, or is it that the plane cannot turn?

"I think they can ... I have flown planes before, you know ... it can turn very sharply," he said at the Langkawi International Airport.

Malaysia's decision to bar Singapore Air Force planes from entering its airspace without clearance took effect today.

Dr Mahathir was asked to comment on a report that Singapore considered Malaysia's decision violated an agreement calling for advance notice of such moves.

Singapore's Defence Ministry said the RSAF had alternative arrangement to ensure its operational effectiveness was not compromised.

On Singapore's claim that it was given short notice about the decision and that according to the agreement it had to be notified six months before it took effect, Dr Mahathir said he didn't know about such a requirement.

On praises in a report by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development of Malaysia's economic measures to revive the economy, he said now they admitted that it was a wise economic measure.

"They are the people who once said I am mad but now it seems the mad man has his followers."

Asked to comment on financial speculator George Soros' statement that Malaysia's economic measures would affect neighbouring nations, Dr Mahathir said actually the current economic problems were not a Malaysian problem.

"When they attacked Thailand, they said it had a contagion effect and they attacked us even though there was nothing wrong with our fundamentals.

"They are just interested in making money through short selling of currencies ... therefore they created excuses that our administrative system was not right and there were practices of nepotism and cronyism ... they are just hypocrites."

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