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Mahathir-Leader

A LEADER SHOULD SET FOUNDATION FOR COUNTRY, SAY PM

LANGKAWI, June 27 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that a leader should think about the future of his country to enable him to set the right foundation.

A leader had to plan for the long-term future, he told reporters after launching the "Make It Langkawi" joint marketing programme, here.

"We must see what will happen 100 years from now and that's why we have to plan something good for everyone, the business and this country," he said when answering questions from foreign journalists about his future in the government.

Citing the KL International Airport (KLIA) as an example, he said the government had designed an airport that could be expanded to cater to more passengers in the future.

"Building the airport near the city is very difficult because nobody wants to have their house near the airport. So the government acquired land that is not in the city area and built an airport (with capacity) that can be expanded from the present 18 million passengers a year to 120 million passengers," he said.

Dr Mahathir said he did not think about what he could enjoy as prime minister.

"What I'm thinking about is the long-term future of this country," he said.

He said the future of his position in the government depended on whether he was well enough to run this country and whether his party still wanted him.

Answering a question on capital control, Dr Mahathir said currency control had proven to be very good for Malaysia but it could not be tried in just any country because it had to be done with regards to the reserves and financial system on that particular country.

"We actually enable business to be done smoothly because you know exactly the worth of money for dealing in business," he said.

The sign of an economic recovery was very clear, he said, citing the example of the rise of the Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange composite index from 262 points last year to 800 points recently.

Dr Mahathir also said that the Malaysian government would only lift the capital controls if the international money system improved.

He also answered several questions on the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC), vision 2020 and foreign investments.

On investments, Dr Mahathir said Malaysia still needed foreign investors for their money and expertise to help develop the nation.

"Although we imposed an exit tax, I can see the foreign investors still coming here to do their business in this country," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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