

14 SEP 1999

Mahathir-Foreigners

M'SIA CAPABLE OF SETTLING ITS OWN PROBLEMS, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 14 (Bernama) -- The world is now forced to accept the fact that Malaysia is capable of settling its own problems without any foreign help, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

"President (Bill) Clinton admits that Malaysia can (do it)," he said at a meet-the-people gathering in Taman Keramat, here, in conjunction with his official visit to Selangor.

"Today, the arrogant and strong IMF (International Monetary Fund) also has to admit that Malaysia has succeeded in reviving its economy," he said before some 20,000 people who attended the gathering.

Dr Mahathir said the economic crisis, which started in mid-July, 1997, was the work of foreigners to ruin the Malaysian economy,

When the country became poor, the government would be forced to seek its help, and it would impose conditions so that the economy would be surrendered to them, he added.

"However, we have created our own ways to revive the country's economy. And today, our economy has recovered," the prime minister said.

He said that when the economy faced a downturn from 1983 to 1985, the government had managed to overcome it. In fact, the country's economy grew rapidly at 8.0 per cent annually.

Dr Mahathir said that due to this rapid growth, the world had recognised Malaysia as one of the "tiger" economies.

The success in reviving the country's economy was due to the actions taken by the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) party, which wanted to continue to serve the people, he said

"We serve to develop the country and to defend its sovereignty. That is all.

"That is the struggle of the BN and its component parties. It is not about who becomes the top person, the prime minister or the deputy prime minister," Dr Mahathir said.

He said although there were efforts made to determine the country's future leader, that is only a coincidence as without a leader, it would be difficult to take up a struggle.

The prime minister stressed that efforts would be enhanced to ensure a rapid economic development.

"This is to enable Malaysians to stand as tall as the other races, tall as the Petronas Twin Towers, the tallest building in the world," he said.

-- BERNAMA

AD/MFJ MA FR