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Mahathir-Criticisms

MAHATHIR TO FIND OUT REASONS BEHIND CRITICISMS AGAINST M'SIA

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 16 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has said that he would use the World Economic Forum scheduled to take place in Switzerland at the end of the month to find out the reason behind a string of criticisms levelled against Malaysia lately.

"There has been a lot of criticisms against us for what we have done. So, I want to know why they are criticising us and denying that we are doing well," he said when asked about his participation in the forum during an interview with Radio and Television Malaysia.

The interview followed the taping of the prime minister's Hari Raya Aidilfitri message at Wisma TV in Angkasapuri, here.

Dr Mahathir said he would also take the opportunity to relate Malaysia's experience in trying to deal with the economic and financial crisis buffeting Asia.

"I'm not counting on support. I just want to tell them that this is our experience. Whether they believe it or not, that is up to them," he said.

Malaysia has been criticised for taking "drastic" steps to insulate its economy against the vagaries of international currency trading, including by way of introducing selective currency control in September last year.

But on many occasions, Dr Mahathir had defended the moves, saying that they had spurred activities in sectors such as financial, automotive and property.

On the Japanese aid package of US\$30 billion for Asian countries facing economic crisis, the prime minister said that Japan had requested Malaysia to provide details of the projects for which the loan would be used.

Dr Mahathir was also asked whether there are other parties or countries trying to obstruct or influence Japan in respect of the loan to be given to Malaysia.

"We suspect that there are countries which are not very happy. We do not know what they have done but it is clear that they are not happy," he said.

To another question, Dr Mahathir said that Asean was capable of reviving its economy through their own measures.

Commenting on Asean member countries' use of their own currencies in trading activities, Dr Mahathir said that even though response was good, its implementation was unsatisfactory.

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