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Mahathir-Regret

MAHATHIR REGRETS ATTEMPTS TO DISCREDIT MALAYSIAN LEADERS OVERSEAS

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, Oct 29 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the attempts by some Malaysians to discredit the national leaders abroad will not affect these leaders but will instead hurt the people.

Such acts could be regarded as "treason" to the country because they could cause investors to lose interest in Malaysia, the prime minister said.

"Such acts should not be done by Malaysians because any act like this will not have any effect on the government leaders. But if the nation's economy does not grow rapidly, the people will suffer," he said.

Referring to the recent move by supporters of former deputy prime minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim to engage an Washington-based lobby firm to discredit the national leaders, Dr Mahathir said it should not have been made.

"Doing something to discredit one's own country is treason to the country no matter what their frustration is," he said at a luncheon with the Malaysian community, here.

Dr Mahathir, who arrived here today for a two-day visit, also touched on the government's all-out efforts to rehabilitate the country following the economic crisis.

He said that despite the obstructions to these efforts, including criticisms of the government's selective currency controls, the national economy's recovery today was acknowledged by the critics themselves.

"Some said that countries that received aid from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) recovered more quickly but when I spoke to some parties, this is clearly not true because although they recovered, they were saddled with debts," he said.

Dr Mahathir also expressed his confidence that if the economy continued to grow at the present rate, the country's aspiration to achieve developed nation status by 2020 would be achieved.

On disunity among the Malays as a result of the inculcation by some parties of the culture of ingratitude among the Malays, he said it must be avoided because it would weaken the Malays who were the pillar of the nation.

Dr Mahathir also advised Malaysians in Brunei to abide by its laws and policies.

"I believe that Malaysians in Brunei are aware of their duty to abide by the laws of this country. Brunei is our friend and we want to foster relations between the two countries," he said.

There are an estimated 23,000 Malaysians living and working in Brunei comprising students, lecturers, lawyers, teachers, doctors and businessmen, among others.

Present were the prime minister's wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, Malaysian High Commissioner to Brunei Wan Yusof Embong and about 200 Malaysians.

-- BERNAMA

JS JK