

# Good economic performance will contribute to country's growth, says PM

SUN - 7 DEC 2001

**KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs.** The good economic performance experienced in October will contribute to the country's economic growth, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

Mahathir, who is also finance minister, said since the announcement of Budget 2002 in October, the country's economy has been encouraging.

"Our trade performance in October is rather good and figures have indicated that our economic performance in October was good.

"I am confident that the fiscal stimulus expenditure will contribute towards the economic growth," he told a press conference after tabling the Budget 2002 at the Dewan Negara here today.

Mahathir said Malaysia is lucky to have sufficient funds which enables it to inject a huge sum of money into the economy to help the economic growth.

He also said that the total RM7.3 billion of stimulus package announced by the government this year should all be spent

this year.

In March and September this year, the government packaged RM3 billion and RM4.3 billion stimulus plans respectively.

The RM4.3 billion is to cushion the adverse impact from the US economy, hit by terrorist attacks on New York and Washington.

However, Mahathir said, there may be some shortfall in spending all the money within this year as there are some problems with the implementation machinery.

Asked whether there is going to be any fresh funds injected, he replied: "Not until the end of the year. We have made all the necessary expenditure provision, so there will be no more stimulus package until end of December."

Mahathir also said that of the RM4.3 billion package, more than RM3 billion has been spent so far.

He also expressed confidence in achieving a positive growth in the fourth quarter of the year.

"Consumption should go up and our export has increased in October.

There are already signs that tourists are coming back. So in many areas, there are positive signs and I am hopeful that there will be growth.

"We must remember that we have achieved a very high growth rate in the 4th quarter last year, so it is very difficult to achieve a growth rate higher than that," he added.

Asked about a claim by an MP that the Gross Domestic Product figures are misleading and that the country is actually in recession, the prime minister said the MP should prove his allegation.

"Prove it. It is easy to say, but prove that we are wrong.

"These are figures that are accepted by the whole world and Malaysia does not hide anything.

"We could have shown the figure of growth but when there is a negative growth in the third quarter, we showed and explained that there is negative growth of 1.3%. When there is a growth of 0.5%, we did not say that there is a 10% growth," he said.