

08 APR 2001

Mahathir-Performance

DR MAHATHIR SATISFIED WITH PERFORMANCE OF SEVENTH MALAYSIA PLAN

LANGKAWI, April 8 (Bernama) -- The government is satisfied with the performance of the Seventh Malaysia Plan (7MP) because it has achieved most of its objectives, Datuk Seri Mahathir Mohamad said today.

Its performance was good except during the recession when the objective to eradicate poverty was derailed, the prime minister told reporters after inspecting the progress of the yacht construction and repair centre project in Tanjung Lembung, here.

He said the Eighth Malaysia Plan, which will start this year, hoped to continue with this good performance towards realising the objectives of Vision 2020 to make the country a developed nation by that year.

The government had also taken pre-emptive measures with an additional RM3 billion allocation to cushion the effects of a United States economic slowdown on Malaysia's economy, he added.

He said the government had also changed its approach by making new investments in infrastructure through various development projects including building more schools.

The government did not want to be too dependent on the private sector and would instead adopt this new approach which could contribute to national development.

"When the economic recession hit, our economy was destroyed and needed a new approach by not depending on the private sector after it was weakened," he said.

The prime minister said that during the recession, the government faced problems because it had to focus on currency controls besides tackling other major problems which also weakened many big as well as new companies.

"We will revive these companies and try again to develop new ones to achieve the objective of the national development policy," he said, adding that the efforts would continue under the Eighth Malaysia Plan.

The government would continue to help these companies although certain parties, especially the foreigners, wanted the weak companies with problems to go bankrupt from inefficiency, he said.

"Before this, they were efficient and made profits but when attacked like this, not only will companies in Malaysia face problems but many conglomerates in the world will also weaken if the value of their country's currency is reduced by half and their share market drops," he said.

Dr Mahathir said it was not the fault of the companies because the recession was caused by those who wanted to reap profits.

Meanwhile, he called on the people to ignore the latest tactic of the Terengganu PAS leaders in claiming that the special payment given by the federal government in place of the oil royalty was haram (forbidden by Islam).

"Why bother too much about it because I myself have been labelled kafir, a follower of Kamal Attartuk and all sorts (of things)," he said.

Dr Mahathir said PAS was quick to use words like kafir and haram whenever it disagreed with anything.

Expressing regret that Muslims were doing such a thing, he said PAS' latest action would not benefit the people but would only slander others.

-- BERNAMA

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