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Mahathir-Independent

GOVT WILL ENSURE M'SIA CONTINUES TO BE INDEPENDENT, SAYS PM

KUALA LUMPUR, July 9 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that the government will always ensure that Malaysia is independent of those trying to control the nation's economy and finances.

Speaking at the Treasury's monthly assembly at the government offices complex in Jalan Duta here, Dr Mahathir, who is Finance Minister, said as such, it was essential for the government to ensure that the country's administration continues to be organised and efficient.

"I hope that the officers and staff of this ministry are geared to equip themselves with knowledge and upgrade their capability so that the country can uphold this independence," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that the role played by government officers and staff would ensure that the country continues to be independent and would not be at the mercy of those wishing to dominate the country.

"This ministry is most vital as it is responsible in managing the country's finances and if inefficient, the situation will not be like it is now," he said.

Dr Mahathir again reminded the Treasury's staff of the challenges of globalisation which would have the same effect as when the country faced economic crisis following the manipulation of the ringgit by rogue currency speculators in 1997.

"If we are not efficient in managing our country's finances and we are not wise in our spending, we will be exposed to the need to keep on asking from those who wish to dominate us.

"When our nation's economy and finances are controlled, we will not be able to plan developments which we have been doing since independence," he said.

Dr Mahathir said thankfully, Malaysia was still free of foreign dictates over its economy and finances unlike some other countries which had to borrow from certain quarters following the attacks by the rogue speculators.

He said that the government was determined to strive harder so that the country was free of the dictates of those trying to take advantage.

The prime minister said that even though previously it was not uncommon for the country to request for loans from the World Bank, the government no longer do so but borrow from others which do not impose conditions and instead provide soft loans to the country.

Dr Mahathir, who attended the monthly assembly for the first time after taking over as Finance Minister, hoped that the Treasury's staff were in full control of finances and administration to fortify themselves from foreign control.

"I believe that even though sometimes there is a change in ministers, the officers and staff will remain in the ministry and they provide the continuity to the administration of the country's finances," he said.

He was confident that the ministry's staff would not shirk their responsibilities and to always ensure that the administration of the finances was carried out with efficiency and wisdom.

"As such, we can save our country in this globalisation era from being controlled by foreign nations.

"I hope during my tenure as Finance Minister, which is still short, I will get the same support and performance," he said while thanking the Treasury's staff who have carried out their duties well.

-- BERNAMA
NZ ES RM