

# We built using our own money: Dr M

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PUTRAJAYA: Malaysia can look proudly on its success as it did not depend on hand-outs.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday Malaysia could develop rapidly as it has sufficient funds for its development projects.

"We did not borrow from other countries or foreign funds. We developed the country using our own money ... we borrow from domestic sources," he said at the Finance Ministry's monthly gathering as well as the official opening of the ministry's new building.

Mahathir, who is also the

finance minister, said the government did not borrow from external sources as it collected taxes from the people and corporate bodies, and this money was utilised for national development.

"In many other countries, taxes could not be collected, especially income tax, thus it's difficult for them to pay salaries to their government employees and develop their respective countries," he said.

Mahathir said many foreign leaders were surprised when told that Malaysia developed out of the revenue collected from taxes.

He said a good and effi-

cient civil service had also helped in developing the country properly.

Income tax had increased by 26% in the past few years and this was possible because of the efficiency of the Inland Revenue Board.

"Agencies such as the Inland Revenue Board and the Royal Customs Department now set up targets in terms of taxes to be collected but this does not mean people are being pressured to pay taxes," he said.

Although the government did not pressure the people to pay tax, he said, they should pay whatever taxes were imposed.

"We don't pressure the people to pay tax but effective and efficient efforts carried out in collecting taxes were key to our success," he said.

Mahathir also explained that the country's financial position now was healthy after overcoming the economic slowdown and financial crisis several years ago.

He said the RM1 billion collected monthly from the Employees Provident Fund also contributed to the financial stability.

"The EPF fund has reached RM200 billion and the money has been administered efficiently," he said.