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Mahathir-Computer

PM AGREES WITH SCRAPPING OF EPF COMPUTER PURCHASE SCHEME

PUTRAJAYA, Aug 20 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that he fully agrees with the scrapping of the Computer Purchase Withdrawal Scheme (SPPK) for Employees Provident Fund (EPF) members.

"I feel uneasy about the use of EPF savings for other purposes. EPF savings are meant for use in retirement but if before retiring we have spent the money, there will be problems later," he said.

He said computer financing was very different from financing house purchase because a house can be occupied forever but a computer would eventually become "out-of-date".

"That (computer financing) is not the objective for establishing EPF," he told a news conference after officiating at a ceremony to mark the completion of Putrajaya Lake here.

Yesterday, EPF Chairman Tan Sri Abdul Halim Ali said SPPK, which was introduced in July 2001, had been scrapped because studies showed that 66.5 percent of contributors who made withdrawals under the scheme had misused the money.

Dr Mahathir said they could find other sources of financing to buy computers as computers were not too expensive and, in fact, some companies were renting out computers at RM50 a month.

Meanwhile, when asked on Indonesian People's Consultative Council (MPR) Speaker Amien Rais' statement criticising Malaysia for whipping Indonesian illegal immigrants, Dr Mahathir said: "I don't want to respond to such things. I don't conduct relations with other countries like that."

"Actually, Singapore also has got the same thing (law). I didn't see anybody complaining. You stay long (overstay) in Singapore, you get whipping. We learn from Singapore-lah," he said.

On Putrajaya Lake, the prime minister expressed satisfaction with its development, saying the lake had impressed many foreign visitors to his office.

"When I showed them the lake from my office and explained that it is a man-made lake, most of them were surprised and impressed by its vastness and beauty," he said.

He said from a two-metre wide stream, the lake had become big, beautiful and deep enough for various types of recreational activities.

A beach might be provided for the benefit of the public soon, he said.

The 570ha lake includes a 197ha wetland and has controlled water quality and a regulated depth of 21 metres.

Dr Mahathir said there were now some 30,000 people living in Putrajaya although the area has only 85 registered voters.

-- BERNAMA

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