

23 AUG 2002

MAHATHIR-VICTORY

M'SIA'S IMPRESSIVE ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE A NATIONAL VICTORY

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 23 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad regards Malaysia's impressive economic performance, which helped to silence many critics, as a national victory and not a personal one.

"I don't care about personal victory. This is a national victory and I am one of the many in the team," he told reporters after officiating the Pan Malaysia FELDA second generation assembly and symposium here today.

Dr Mahathir said this when asked whether he regarded it as a personal victory that the country had managed to show a better economic growth following efforts taken by the government to tackle the effects of the 1997 regional financial crisis.

Malaysia's approach in tackling its economic woes by introducing the capital control, including pegging the ringgit, was criticised by many before.

Dr Mahathir said, "Yes, we silenced the critics of Malaysia".

Bank Negara just announced an impressive 3.8 percent growth in the second quarter gross domestic product (GDP) which may lead to the central bank revising its full year estimate of 3.5 percent.

Malaysia had registered a GDP of 0.4 percent in 2001 and 1.1 percent for the first quarter of this year.

Another significance in the economic recovery was the closure of the Corporate Debt Restructuring Committee (CDRC) after having successfully resolved the problems of non-performing loans plaguing the banking system.

Bank Negara governor, Tan Sri Dr Zeti Akhtar Aziz said the restructuring of the banking system was done at a much lower cost of below 5.0 percent of the GDP, a far cry from expectations by international rating agencies that it would exceed 40 percent. -- BERNAMA

SHO KTC