

23/08/2002

Dr M: Public can now afford to own computers

NILAI, Thurs. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that there was no need for the Government to set up a special fund to realise its "One Home One Computer" objective.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Finance Minister, said that the people should instead buy computers with their own money as it is sold at affordable prices now.

"The computer is made so cheap now it only costs RM1,800 compared to between RM4,000 and RM5,000 before. You pay only RM50 monthly or you can even rent them ... so if you really want to learn, it is possible, unless the intention is to cheat," Dr Mahathir said.

The Prime Minister was asked to comment on the Malaysian Trades Union Congress' proposal for the setting up of a special fund to assist the public who wished to own computers.

MTUC made the call yesterday, after the Employees Provident Fund announced recently that its computer scheme had been scrapped due to misuse of funds and other fraudulent acts.

Dr Mahathir was speaking at a Press conference after performing the ground breaking for the Islamic University College of Malaysia's main campus near Bandar Baru Nilai here.

On another matter, Dr Mahathir said that the Government does not plan to revise its Gross Domestic Product growth projection for this year although analysts, both foreign and local, have predicted an improved outlook.

"Our growth projection is still 3.5 per cent for 2002 and there will be no review at the moment," he said, adding that the "picture" would be much clearer when the 2003/2004 budget is tabled in September.

Asked if he will be presenting the budget, Dr Mahathir said: "Yes! I'm the Finance Minister" and to another question that he had hinted on the appointment of a second Finance Minister, he replied: "Yes, maybe I can, but even if I appoint and I suddenly think of presenting the Budget ... I could do so".