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`We must learn to depend less on FDI'

reports on "Dewan Rakyat" by Ramlan Said; Hayati Hayatudin; Farrah Naz MALAYSIA has to learn to depend less on foreign direct investment in promoting the country's growth, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad told Barisan Nasional MPs and Senators yesterday.

Instead, he said, the Government would be utilising more of the local resources and capabilities of the people to ensure there are no hiccups in development and projects.

The Prime Minister said this at a pre-council meeting before the start of the year's last session of the Dewan Rakyat.

"The Prime Minister gave an overview of the economy and that most of the FDIs are now going to China.

"Because of this new trend, he reminded us of the importance of utilising our own resources and funds," said one MP.

The Government expected elected representatives to play their role in facing this new challenge.

Another MP said the Prime Minister also broached the subject of "imported" and "phantom" voters.

He said Dr Mahathir directed all MPs and Senators, especially division heads of the various parties under the coalition, to scrutinise the electoral roll of their constituencies.

The directive came in the wake of discoveries in the recently concluded Pendang and Anak Bukit by-elections in which Pas, seeking to enhance its chances, was found to have moved its supporters from elsewhere to the two constituencies.

On Budget 2003 to be tabled on Sept 20, the MP said Dr Mahathir briefed them on the new approach taken by the Government in its formulation.

"Unlike past years where the Cabinet is only briefed about the Budget on the morning of its tabling, its involvement now is much earlier.

"To date, the Cabinet has discussed the new Budget twice, with their input and feedback incorporated before the official tabling."

The meeting was also informed that some 1,000 oral questions had been submitted by MPs for this session. This number was described by Dewan Rakyat officials as among the highest in Parliament's history.