

Govt seeks to restore nation's wealth within two years - PM

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KUALA LUMPUR, June 9 (Bernama) -- Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad who has previously professed his intention to hold the Prime Ministership for just two years, has stressed that the government will prioritise efforts at restoring the wealth and rescuing the nation's economy within this period.

However, he said the two years was not a time frame, but more of a proposal that might be achieved sooner or later, depending on the circumstances.

"If possible, in the near term, I want to overcome all the problems faced. That is my priority, to restore the wealth and economy and make the country one that is progressive.

"Money is not important if I succeed. What is important is the job satisfaction. This is what I am working towards," he said in an exclusive interview with Sinar Harian at the Perdana Leadership Foundation here recently.

The interview among other things looked at Pakatan Harapan's role in repairing the damage caused by the previous administration, the focus on efforts at reducing the national debt, maintaining the relationship with the Royal institution and Dr Mahathir's key focus in helming the current government.

Touching on Malaysia's debt at present of more than RM1 trillion, Dr Mahathir said no country should have a debt beyond its means and expressed surprise at how the previous government could have allowed it to happen.

Among the action taken by the former government was accruing a large part of loans from other countries, and foreign banks at a high interest rate, as well as from local sources.

Dr Mahathir said in the meantime, the main thing for the government under Pakatan Harapan now to do is, ensure that the loans can be repaid.

On the basis of this policy, Pakatan Harapan has resolved to reduce the debt, while finding ways to achieve this.

"That is why we are not going to spend anymore. we want to reduce. If we are going to repay, we must find ways. It is not the norm to borrow to repay, as the country must not have debts beyond its means. We will spend according to what we can afford, " he added.

The Prime Minister emphasised that this is also a reason from the financial aspect as to why finances must be looked after, to ensure it is not mired in debt.

"Like (in debt) with Ah Long's. If we cannot pay, they will beat us up. It is the same, if we cannot repay, he (the party extending the loan) will beat us, but more in words like "I will bankrupt you, " he said.

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