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Mahathir-Taiwan

MAHATHIR QUASHES REPORTS OF CRUDE OIL DEAL WITH TAIWAN

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 29 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today quashed reports that Malaysia had sought US\$8.8 billion from Taiwan in exchange for Malaysian crude oil.

Speaking to reporters on his return from Japan where he made a stopover after attending the Asia Pacific Economic forum summit in Canada, Dr Mahathir said it was just another rumour.

He was asked about a foreign wire report yesterday in which a government source in Taipei had denied Taiwanese newspaper reports that Dr Mahathir had asked for the deal.

It also said that Taiwan's state-funded Central News Agency quoted government spokesman David Lee as refuting the reports.

Dr Mahathir joked with the reporters by saying that Malaysia had "requested for US\$100 billion but it was rejected".

"Start another rumour that we have asked for US\$100 billion, if possible US\$200 (billion)," he said to laughter from those present including his deputy, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, who had turned up to welcome him back.

The prime minister also clarified that he did not make a planned stopover in Taiwan en route to Tokyo from Canada.

There was no invitation from the Taiwanese foreign ministry for him to make a trip to Taiwan.

Dr Mahathir said he made a brief stop in Taipei when the permission for his plane to land in Tokyo came in late.

He took the opportunity while in Taiwan to meet Taiwanese Prime Minister Vincent Siew, he added. -- BERNAMA

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