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Ling-Threat

THREAT TO LEADERS' LIVES SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN LIGHTLY, SAYS LING

PORT KLANG, March 18 (Bernama) -- The threat to the lives of national leaders should not be taken lightly and must be treated as a very serious security problem of the nation, Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said today.

He however expressed confidence in the country's security forces which he said were very capable of handling such a situation as and when it arises.

"I am very confident the security forces are capable of thwarting any attempt to assassinate our prime minister and other national leaders," he told reporters at Pulau Indah, here.

He was asked to comment on the revelation last night by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad of incitement against national leaders, after chairing the Umno Supreme Council meeting.

Dr Mahathir said there were tapes being circulated asking Muslims to assassinate leaders including him. He also said the incitement could no longer be taken lightly.

Ling said that 99.9 per cent of the country's population were very level-headed people and only a very small fraction have this kind of lunatic thinking but their act could be very dangerous to the security of the nation.

Describing such acts as very mischievous, Ling said the country could expect such happenings from time to time because of the popularity of the prime minister.

Earlier, Ling launched a RM20 million simulator centre at the Star Cruises Terminal in West Port, Pulau Indah.

The state-of-the art centre is the most important component of the new Star Cruises Training Centre in West Port as a long-term plan to develop a world-class cruise industry in Asia.

The centre, first of its kind in the region, has the capacity to train not only the Star Cruises crew but also the crew of other shipping companies.

He said its establishment was very timely in line with the country's desire to develop world class maritime facilities in the region.

Ling said the private sector's effort also complement the government's efforts to inculcate maritime safety awareness as the world's waterways and sea lanes were becoming increasingly busy.

One of the ways to mitigate accidents at sea, he said was to ensure that ship officers were fully equipped and prepared for any eventualities through rigorous and comprehensive training.

Ling also urged port operators and shipping companies in the region to take advantage of the centre.

On the cruise industry, he said that from nothing, the industry with the Star Cruises as the pioneer, had seen tremendous growth, attracting 250,000 cruise passengers to Malaysia every year while creating job opportunities in various sectors.

-- BERNAMA

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