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`Tourism not hit by JE outbreak'

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the Japanese encephalitis outbreak has not affected the tourism industry.

"This is because the virus is only confined to specific areas. It is not affecting the whole country," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the Government's priority was to eradicate the disease.

"We want to eliminate it ... this is the most important thing," he said.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir had chaired a four-hour meeting of the National Information Technology Council in Cyberjaya.

Asked on the difficulties encountered by some pig farmers in obtaining bank loans to buy feed for their animals, Dr Mahathir said: "That is a problem that we will have to tackle. The fact is that the financiers think that it is no longer a viable industry. People are worried to eat pork now."

Dr Mahathir said there was no discrimination against pig farmers.

"You can lend if you think you can get back your money. If the banks feel they cannot get back their money, they will not lend. It is just like any other business."

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