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MAHATHIR-GROWTH

MAHATHIR: M'SIA REMAINS OPTIMISTIC OF SUSTAINING STRONG GROWTH

KUALA LUMPUR, June 14 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said Malaysia remained optimistic of sustaining its positive growth despite some expectations of a hard landing in the US economy.

"We have reasonable hope that we can sustain our growth," he told a press conference after launching Perodua Kenari here today.

Malaysia's 11.7 percent first quarter growth has spurred a wave of upgrades by foreign investment houses for the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Replying to a question on Malaysia's economic prospects for the full year amid predictions by some analysts of a hard landing by the US economy, Dr Mahathir said domestic growth in the second half of this year may not be as high as in the first and second quarter of this year.

However, he said the second half year's GDP growth would still be higher than the 1999 third quarter figure of 8.1 percent.

Bank Negara Malaysia has forecast a GDP growth of between 7.5 and 8.0 percent for this year.

On whether Malaysia would be able to register 8.0 percent growth for the whole of this year, Dr Mahathir said: "I don't know. We'll try." --

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