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Ghani-Economy

JOHOR'S ECONOMY NOT BADLY HIT BY US ECONOMIC SLOWDOWN, SAYS GHANI

JOHOR BAHRU, Nov 11 (Bernama) -- Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman said today Johor's economy has not been severely affected by the slowdown in the US economy and the US-led attacks on Afghanistan.

He said unlike neighbouring Singapore which is feeling the impact of the US's sluggish economy, the state's economy was moving and stable given its holistic and diversified economic activities.

"We are not affected although our people working in Singapore have been retrenched. We have more than 100,000 job vacancies in the country," he told reporters when asked to comment to what extent Johor's economy has been hit by US's attack on Afghanistan.

Ghani said Johor's economic structure does not rely solely on the industrial sector but also focused on agriculture, food production and tourism.

"Johor's economic structure is more holistic and diversified. Besides having multinational companies, we also give attention to planting of oil palm, food production like poultry farming and planting vegetables which do not solely depend on export markets," he said.

He said allocations and specific assistance extended under the federal government's fiscal policy had helped the state government to stimulate the state's economy.

Besides that, Johor also had petrochemical-based industries which received foreign direct investments from Taiwanese and Japanese companies, he said.

Ghani said the state government was confident to boost domestic tourism based on current scenario and efforts to woo local tourists.

He, however, acknowledged that with fewer Singaporeans crossing over to Johor, it would take a toll on local traders especially restaurant operators here.

"Before 30,000 to 50,000 Singaporeans come to Johor daily and 50,000 to 70,000 during weekends and public holidays but now their arrivals have dwindled," he said.

He also said the state government would take drastic measures to ensure smooth implementation of infrastructure projects under the Eighth Malaysia Plan without any problems especially on land matters.

Among the reasons for project delays were the difficulty faced by government departments in finding suitable land sites, he said.

In less than two months, the state government would act to identify public infrastructure projects like schools, fire or police stations to be built in the state do not face land site hitches, he said.

"We want to resolve land site issues this year to enable infrastructure development projects under the Eighth Plan be carried out smoothly.

"The move is in line with the decision made at the recent Menteri Besar's meeting with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad," he added.

-- BERNAMA

RAM TS