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BUDGET-SPEECH
REALISING FULL POTENTIAL OF SERVICES SECTOR

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 19 (Bernama) -- There is ample room for the role and contribution of the services sector to be improved, the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The services sector is one of the main contributors to growth, accounting for 55 per cent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2001, he said in his speech tabled at the Dewan Rakyat today.

"The nation has modern ports and airports with the potential for becoming hubs for (the movement of cargo) as well as attracting domestic and international integrated express operators," he said.

The Johor ports (at Pasir Gudang and Tanjung Pelepas), he said, must seize the opportunity from their strategic location and proximity to Singapore to provide world-class port services.

According to Mahathir, the performance of the tourism sector has been excellent with foreign tourist arrivals recording the highest level at more than 1 million a month.

"Nevertheless, concerns on the safety of air travel, particularly in the west in the wake of the September 11 attack, will affect tourist arrivals from these countries," he said.

"Thus, efforts must be intensified to attract tourists from Asia, in particular from countries in the Persian Gulf and West Asia as well as India, China and the ASEAN region, in addition to further promoting domestic tourism," he said. -- BERNAMA

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