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Thailand-Separatist

THAILAND DOES NOT BELIEVE MALAYSIA SUPPORTS SEPARATIST MOVEMENT

KUALA LUMPUR, April 24 (Bernama) -- The Thai Government does not believe that the Malaysian Government has supported the separatist movement in southern Thailand, Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra said today.

He said Thailand was confident that Malaysia did not support the movement because it had been giving tremendous support and cooperation to Thailand on security matters in the past.

"No, Thai government does not believe that Malaysia supported it," he said at a news conference when asked by reporters to comment on Malaysia's statement that it did not support the separatist movement.

Thaksin is here on a two-day visit from today, his first official visit abroad since assuming the prime minister's post.

He is accompanied by a 71-member delegation of ministers, officials and journalists, who included Deputy Prime Minister Pitak Intharavittayanan, Foreign Minister Surakiat Sathirathai, Commerce Minister Adisai Bhotharamik, Finance Minister Somkid Jatusripitak and Interior Minister Purachai Piemsomboon.

He said Malaysia and Thailand had good bilateral relations and co-operation in terms of solving their security issue and they had no problems on that.

Asked to comment on news reports that the separatist movement had a secret meeting in Malaysia before the bombing incident in southern Thailand recently, he said Malaysia and Thailand had border cooperation and it could help resolve the problem.

"There is no problem with the Malaysian citizens but we are still chasing those behind it (recent bombing)," he said, adding that Thailand would seek Malaysia's cooperation to track those who had been issued with the warrant of arrest.

Asked whether he had raised the matter during his "four-eyed" meeting with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Thaksin said he would leave the matter to the officials from both countries to handle it.

Thaksin also expressed confidence that there would be no problem in terms of security cooperation between the two countries in future since both countries had good relationship between their respective Home Ministry.

-- BERNAMA

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