

PM: We won't accept Aussie troops

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ALOR STAR: Malaysia will not accept the deployment of Australian troops in the country in Canberra's war against terrorism, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

He said Australian soldiers might become targets if they were deployed in South-East Asia.

"I feel that if troops from

Australia or anywhere else are deployed in the region, they may become targets.

"While there is peace here now, the region might be exposed to terror acts," he told reporters after chairing a Kubang Pasu Umno division meeting here.

Dr Mahathir, who is Kubang Pasu Umno division chief, was asked to comment on Australia

Prime Minister John Howard's statement that Australia might send its troops to the region to fight terrorism. Howard's statement came on the heels of the Oct 12 bombings in Bali, which killed at least 183 people, many of them Australians.

On the cancellation of the G-15 heads of government meeting in Venezuela due to a

power seizure there, Dr Mahathir said he was disappointed.

"This is a grouping of South countries and sometimes these countries face many problems to the extent that they cannot have a meeting with a full forum," he said of the meeting which was supposed to start tomorrow.