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Mahathir-Germany

DR M DISAPPOINTED OVER GERMANY'S HIGHEST CAUTION ALERT ON M'SIA

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 25 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today expressed disappointment over Germany's decision to put Malaysia on the "highest caution alert" for its citizens travelling here.

The Prime Minister said he would like to know the evidence that led the German authorities to reach such a decision.

He advised foreign governments having information on possible security threats in this country to convey such information to the Malaysian authorities.

"It is their duty to inform us if they know of threats in Malaysia which we are not aware of," he told reporters after chairing the Umno Supreme Council meeting here.

Dr Mahathir was commenting on Germany's safety reference posted on its Foreign Affairs Ministry website on Wednesday warning its citizens to increase caution and exercise restraint when going to large public gatherings here.

"Before the background of the recent terrorist attacks in the region (in Bali and the Philippines), an increased threat exists also in Malaysia. With regards to journeys to Malaysia, at present, highest caution is required," the website said.

Asked on the impact such an advisory could have on the country, Dr Mahathir said it could frighten visitors and investors from coming here and could eventually dampen the economy.

"It can amount to economic sabotage if it is not true," he said.

Asked what could be done by Malaysia to address the matter, he said: "We can protest."

Asked on the tendency of the West including its media now to paint the region as not a safe place to go following the deadly Oct 12 bomb blasts in Bali, Dr Mahathir, alluding to the sniper shooting incidents in Washington, said no one was safe anywhere, even in the capital city of a western country.

Turning to the Malaysia-Singapore water pricing dispute, the Prime Minister said Malaysia would study from the legal aspects regarding further measures that could be taken to settle the problem.

"Every day we are losing money," he said of the sale of raw water to Singapore.

He was asked to comment on Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim's statement yesterday that Malaysia could draw up its own water supply act to supersede the water supply agreements with Singapore if negotiations with Singapore reached a deadlock.

To a question, Dr Mahathir said Malaysia had the right to increase or reduce the price of resources it sold to Singapore.

"We have given an undertaking to supply water to them, but not for commercial use," he said.

Dr Mahathir was also asked whether in carrying out that undertaking, Malaysia had an option to refuse to sell water to the island republic.

"We have never said anything about refusing, not in the agreement," he said.

Asked whether the government would allow controversial Sri Lankan researcher Dr Rohan Gunaratna into the country to give a talk at a function organised by the Institute of Strategic and International Studies here next month, the prime minister said this would be the case.

"We have nothing against him. We have studied his book; he did not say what we alleged that he said," he said.

A United Nations Security Council report has included a chart linking the ruling Barisan Nasional to the al-Qaeda terrorist group, reportedly based on information in Gunaratna's book "Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror".

This had caused a furore among BN leaders.

-- BERNAMA

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