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Mahathir-Terror

MALAYSIA'S ECONOMY TO WITHSTAND TERRORIST FEAR, SAYS MAHATHIR

By: Zulkefli Salleh

NEW DELHI, Oct 18 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Malaysia's economic growth will not be very much affected by the fear of terrorism following the terrorist attacks in Bali and the Philippines.

The prime minister said that obviously, terrorist activities would affect the region as a whole, including Malaysia, because it was difficult to determine when and where the terrorists would strike next.

But Malaysia had a reputation for being able to handle terrorist activities for a very long time and had taken effective measures very early to eliminate this problem, he told a news conference here at the end of a three-day visit to India.

He was asked to comment on the concern among businessmen that the recent terrorist bombings in Bali and Zamboanga, Mindanao, would affect Malaysia's services industry and dampen investment.

He said that in any case, terrorist activities would result in foreign direct investment (FDI) being much reduced for the whole region and it had to depend on domestic investment.

Malaysia had emphasised this for its economic growth and thus would not be much affected by the fear of terrorist attacks, Dr Mahathir said.

"Time will show that Malaysia is a safe and stable country," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said that the so-called Malaysian suspect in the terrorist blasts in Bali was not a Malaysian citizen.

The suspect was actually an Indonesian who had obtained permanent resident status in Malaysia and had since returned to Indonesia.

"He is not in Malaysia now and he has claimed that he was not involved but it is up to Indonesia to take whatever action they think fit.

"But if the man comes to Malaysia, we will arrest him," he said.

Touching on the Islamic countries's stand on the war against terrorism, Dr Mahathir said they were expected to take a common stand with regard to combating terrorism at the summit meeting of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) Summit in Kuala Lumpur in November.

"I think most countries of the OIC are against terrorist attacks but they are not speaking in one voice.

"I believe they will reach a common stand with regard to terrorist attacks at the summit," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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