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MAHATHIR-GDP

MAHATHIR: HIGH MARCH EXPORT FIGURES TO CONTRIBUTE TO GDP

KUALA LUMPUR, May 3 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said that the high March trade and export figures would obviously contribute to the growth of the gross domestic product (GDP) in the first quarter.

On top of that, the turnaround of the U.S economy would help boost the demand for Malaysian products.

"It (the March data) will obviously contribute to the growth of the GDP in the first quarter. More importantly, it is indicating that the world economy is recovering, particularly the U.S. economy," Mahathir told reporters after officiating an ICT seminar organised by Umno Youth here today.

Yesterday, the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) said the March trade surplus rose to RM5.1 billion from a surplus of RM3.8 billion in February and a surplus of RM4.1 billion in March last year.

The March figures were the highest monthly trade surplus recorded since Sept 2001.

Total exports in March rose 27.2 percent month-on-month to RM30.8 billion.

The export figures were the highest since November 2000 and the monthly growth rate in March was the highest since March 1997.

Dr Mahathir said the turnaround of the U.S economy would help Malaysia's economy to further improve.

When asked on what figures he expected for the first quarter, Dr Mahathir, who is also the Finance Minister, said: "I dare not say anything. I am a very cautious man." -- BERNAMA

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