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Senate-Budget

MALAYSIA DISAPPOINTED ON BEING PLACED AT TOP OF DANGER LIST

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 18 (Bernama) -- The Government is disappointed over the move by certain countries to place Malaysia on top of the "danger threat" list issued to travellers, the Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has said.

There were also countries which had cancelled international programmes which had been scheduled to be held in Malaysia, he said.

"Such action can affect tourist arrivals and entry of foreign investment," he said in his message in conjunction with the Budget 2003 which was tabled in the Dewan Negara by Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Dr Shafie Mohd Salleh today.

Dr Mahathir said unfounded allegations and the move to link Malaysia and the Barisan Nasional to the Al-Qaeda group was the work of mischievous people who had their own agenda and wanted to tarnish the image and dignity of this country.

"They are uneasy over the success, prosperity and peace that we have achieved so far," said Dr Mahathir who is also Finance Minister.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia had adopted a firm stand against terrorist activities and acted speedily to arrest the influence of certain groups which tried to threaten public order and topple the elected government through the use of force and terrorism.

At the international level, Malaysia co-sponsored the resolution at the United Nations against terrorism and took the initiative to hold a forum to counter terrorist activities, he said.

The Prime Minister said Malaysia had also agreed to the United States' proposal to set up a Regional Training Centre to Counter Terrorism, in this country.

Dr Mahathir said many events which threatened stability in the world had occurred such as the bombings in Bali, Indonesia, the Philippines and Pakistan as well as the hostage crisis involving Chechen fighters in Moscow.

He said the possibility of a United States attack on Iraq could have adverse consequences on the economy and increase tension between Muslims and non-Muslims in the countries concerned including Malaysia.

The uncertain situation overseas had influenced world economic growth which was expected to expand only at 2.8 per cent this year compared to 2.2 per cent last year.

"As a country with an open economy, Malaysia is not exempted from the effects of external developments," he said.

However with the measures implemented by the government, economic recovery was expected to be stronger with the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) this year increasing from 1.1 per cent in the first quarter to 3.8 per cent in the second and performing even better in the third quarter.

Dr Mahathir said he held in high esteem the solid support which the people had given the government as well as the contributions from the private sector which had worked hard to ensure economic growth.

"I am confident that with the Grace of Almighty Allah, we can build an even stronger and more progressive Malaysia with peace and dignity, respected by the international community," the Prime Minister said.

-- BERNAMA

LIB RZS AAM