

STAR = 8 AUG 2003

# Malaysia joins rest of world in condemning Jakarta blast

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysia joins the rest of the world in condemning the bomb blast in Jakarta, but the incident is not likely to affect tourist arrivals or the country's economic growth, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

This was because the country had already proven its mettle in dealing with potential terrorist threats, he said.

"Everyone knows that we already took action even before Sept 11," he told reporters, referring to the terror attacks on New York and Washington two years ago.

"At that time, Malaysia was accused of being inhuman for arresting and detaining people, but now our detractors know," he said.

He said Malaysia would continue to be vigilant and increase its surveillance to prevent similar attacks in the country.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said leaders need political courage to address the grievances that give rise to terrorism.

He said addressing the root causes of terrorism was not capitulation to the demands of terrorists. It was an appeal for honesty and political courage, he said in his keynote address at the 17th Asia-Pacific Roundtable at the Nikko Hotel here.

"Where the terrorist has a legitimate cause we must address it because if we do not, the problem festers and it multiplies," he said.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said the Jemaah Islamiah, which claimed responsibility for the bomb blast, did not serve the cause of Islam because the religion did not condone violent acts.

"Islam does not encourage people to go and bomb anybody or to create violence like that," he said.

International Movement for a just World (JUST) president Dr Chandra Muzaffar warned that terrorist groups in South-East Asia and elsewhere should realise that bombing American hotels or other American-owned establishments would not destroy America's global economic power or its military might.