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Zeti: Growth likely
to exceed 4.5%

MALAYSIA'S economic growth this year is expected to exceed the official forecast of 4.5%, Bank Negara governor Tan Sri Dr Zeti Akhtar Aziz said.

"Yes, we are seeing some very encouraging signs," she said when asked to comment on remarks by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad over the weekend that the country's gross domestic product (GDP) would be much better than projected.

"There are encouraging signs to show that will be the case," she said after the launch of the International Centre for Leadership in Finance in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

In her speech earlier, Zeti said the region's financial sector has reached a new stage of development where increasingly, it was becoming a source of growth, especially as several countries in the region are moving towards a knowledge-based and services-led economy.

She said that as efforts were focused on institutional development and capacity building, it was envisaged that forward-looking financial institutions would emerge to face the challenges of liberalisation and globalisation.

"In this context, leaders need to be visionary to see future trends, focused on organisational vision, stay competitive and be able to adapt rapidly to changes," she said.