

'BOYCOTT WON'T AFFECT MALAYSIA-INDIA TIES'

Govt yet to hear from India following speech on Jammu-Kashmir conflict at UN, says PM

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PRIME Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the #BoycottMalaysia movement on social media would not affect Malaysia-India trade and relations.

He said the government had not received any response from the Indian government regarding the hashtag, which began trending on Twitter after he spoke about the need to resolve the Jammu-Kashmir conflict at the 74th United Nations General Assembly in New York on Sept 27.

"So far, I've not received any feedback. I have told (Indian Prime Minister) Narendra Modi to contact me if he is unhappy.

"We don't give criticism to side with anyone, but we call for both

parties to discuss, use arbitration or go to the court of law, not to resort to violence," he said at the Parliament lobby yesterday.

Earlier, Foreign Minister Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah, during the Ministers' Question Time, said the boycott by Indian citizens would not affect the country's image and bilateral ties.

He was responding to a question by Fahmi Fadzil (Pakatan Harapan-Lembah Pantan), who asked about the government's stand on the boycott.

Saifuddin said Malaysia would continue to play a proactive role in fighting oppression, regardless of religion or race.

"Malaysia practises a non-aligned foreign policy and wishes to befriend and trade with all countries except Israel, but we have to make a stand on certain matters. For example, we spoke against the genocide in Cambodia, on the Rohingya as well as on the Jammu and Kashmir issue.

"The Pakistani prime minister contacted Dr Mahathir to ask for his views. At an international event in Russia, Dr Mahathir met

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and gave his views."

The matter was raised again during the question-and-answer session when Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang (Pas-Marang) asked what the government was doing under the Foreign Policy Framework of the New Malaysia to resolve the Kashmir conflict.

"There are chapters in the recently launched Foreign Policy Framework that refer to the fight to represent the oppressed, including in Jammu (and) Kashmir.

"Following the phone conversation between Malaysia's and Pakistan's prime ministers, as well as a discussion with the Indian prime minister, the UN Security Council had, on Aug 16, held a closed-door consultation to discuss the Kashmir issue," Saifuddin said, adding that the meeting was recommended by China following a request from Pakistan.

He said since Malaysia was not a member of the UN Security Council, it sought the help of Indonesia to state Malaysia's stance.

"We would communicate direct-



Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad speaking in Parliament yesterday. PIC BY AIZUDDIN SAAD

ly with Indonesia on matters pertaining to the Jammu-Kashmir conflict discussed at the council. The OIC (Organisation of Islamic Cooperation) contact group meeting held on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly on Sept 25 made a strong stance on the issue. It called for India to, firstly, retract

the revocation of Article 370 (of India's Constitution on Jammu and Kashmir's special status) that sparked the problems today.

"Secondly, for India to repeal its emergency law, and thirdly, for it to recall its soldiers (in Jammu and Kashmir)." **Additional reporting by Teh Athira Yusof**

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