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PLANNERS TOLD: LEARN FROM DESERT PEOPLE

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. — Government planners and officials should learn from (the desert people of) Oman on how to develop and beautify our cities and towns, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

"I was very surprised with its development within a short span of time," he told reporters on his return from a visit to Oman and other Gulf States.

He said they had developed their towns in a very systematic manner.

The towns were built within a period of seven to 10 years in desert areas where the soil was considered not fertile.

"But they have taken the trouble to beautify the towns," he said.

"They have grass, trees, and flowering plants alongside the road and at roundabouts."

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said what once a desert now looked very green.

"I will strongly recommend our officials to visit Oman to learn how the towns are developed there," he added.

He said the Malaysians should particularly learn about the authorities' determination in Oman to beautify their towns.

They had been successful in a situation which was much more difficult than in Malaysia, he added.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said he was satisfied with his weeklong visit to Oman and the other Gulf States of Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates.

Though there were no specific plans worked out for bringing in investment, he said he did talk to the leaders about it.

"They wanted to know in what field could they invest in Malaysia. Most of them have been investing in real estates and financial institutions abroad," he said.

INVESTORS

"I suggested to them the possibility of investing in industries (such as producing motor spare parts) with technology provided by third parties."

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said some Dubai investors might visit Malaysia soon.

On financial aid for Malaysia from the Gulf States, he said: "There was no specific discussion on it.

"But if we need it, there are certain funds for it, particularly in Abu Dhabi."

He said there was a pos-



Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir chatting with some of the dignitaries who turned up to meet him at the airport. From left, the Dewan Rakyat Speaker Tan Sri Syed Nasir Ismail, Transport Minister Datuk Lee San Choon, Public Enterprises Minister Datin Paduka Rafidah Aziz and Education Minister Datuk Dr Sulaiman Daud.

sibility Malaysia would tap the funds for development when needed.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said as a follow-up to his visit, Malaysia hoped to

open direct representations to one or two Gulf States.

The Ambassador in Kuwait is now taking charge of the Gulf State, and is unable to cover the

whole area.

With direct representations, he added Malaysia would be able to keep in closer contact and further strengthen co-operation

with the Gulf States.

He said the Koreans, Japanese, and the Chinese were very active in the Gulf States and were involved in development.