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78 (P)
KUALA LUMPUR, JULY 24 (BERNAMA) — DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY THAT THE USE OF SOLAR ENERGY COULD HELP TO BRING DOWN THE COST OF ELECTRICITY IN THE INDUSTRIAL AND AGRICULTURAL SECTORS.

HE TOLD NEWSMEN HERE AFTER MEETING WITH AUSTRALIAN SOLAR ENERGY CONSULTANT ENCIK DONALD MUNRO THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD ENCOURAGE THE USE OF SUCH ENERGY IN THE COUNTRY.

HE SAID THAT THE TREND AMONG THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES WAS TOWARD THE USE OF SOLAR ENERGY IN VIEW OF THE HIGH COST OF PETROLEUM.

HE FELT THAT IN MALYSIA SOLAR ENERGY COULD BE OF GREAT HELP TO THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR APART FROM HOUSEHOLD USE.

ENCIK MUNRO SAID THAT HIS WESTERN AUSTRALIA-BASED FIRM OF LYONS AND PEIRCE, OF WHICH HE IS EXPORT MARKETING CONSULTANT, WOULD SIGN AN AGREEMENT SOON WITH A JOHORE COMPANY TO PRODUCE SOLAR PANELS AND TANKS FOR LOCAL AND FOREIGN MARKETS.

—BERNAMA MORE 1712/1B

SOLAR 2 KUALA LUMPUR

HE SAID THAT THE FOREIGN MARKET WOULD INCLUDE ASEAN COUNTRIES. ENCIK MUNRO SAID THAT THE SOLAR ENERGY PANELS AND TANKS WOULD BE DESIGNED TO SUIT THE ASEAN COUNTRIES' CLIMATIC CONDITIONS AND SITUATION.

HE SAID THAT INITIALLY THE PLANT AT PASIR GUDANG, JOHORE, WOULD MANUFACTURE BETWEEN 50 AND 100 UNITS OF SOLAR ENERGY PANELS AND TANKS FOR AGRICULTURAL AND INDUSTRIAL USE.

THE PLANT, WHEN FULLY OPERATIONAL, WOULD PRODUCE ABOUT 1,000 UNITS OF PANELS AND TANKS MONTHLY ESPECIALLY FOR WATER HEATERS.

THE FIRST OF ITS KIND IN MALAYSIA, THE PLANT WOULD ALSO MANUFACTURE OTHER ALLIED COMPONENT PARTS OF SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEMS.

IT WOULD ALSO CARRY OUT RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT OF SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEMS IN MALAYSIA. — BERNAMA 1715/1B