

MAHATHIR-RELATIONS
BM

FROM HAMZAH SULAIMAN

PARIS, SEPT. 26 (BERNAMA) -- MALAYSIA NEEDS TO DIVERSIFY ITS RELATIONS WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD TO ENHANCE ITS ABILITY TO MAINTAIN EQUILIBRIUM IN ITS RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID LAST NIGHT.

THE PRIME MINISTER, WHO IS ON A TWO-WEEK HOLIDAY IN EUROPE, SAID THAT BEING OVERLY DEPENDENT IN ITS RELATIONS WITH CERTAIN COUNTRIES SUCH AS THE UNITED KINGDOM, THE UNITED STATES OR JAPAN MIGHT RESULT IN THOSE COUNTRIES, AMONG OTHERS, INFLUENCING THE ECONOMY AND POLITICS OF MALAYSIA.

SPEAKING TO MEMBER OF THE MALAYSIAN COMMUNITY AT THE MALAYSIAN EMBASSY HERE, HE SAID THAT IN THIS REGARD MALAYSIA NEEDED TO UPGRADE ITS RELATIONS WITH FRANCE IN SUCH A WAY THAT IT WOULD BENEFIT BOTH COUNTRIES.

HE SAID MALAYSIA'S EXPORTS TO FRANCE WERE LESS THAN ITS IMPORTS AND MALAYSIA MUST STEP UP ITS EXPORTS DESPITE FACING VARIOUS PROBLEMS AS A RESULT OF THE FRENCH POLICY OF PROTECTING ITS MARKETS.

HE SAID THAT IF FRANCE WANTED TO HAVE A MORE MEANINGFUL TIES, IT SHOULD OPEN UP ITS MARKETS TO MALAYSIA.

-- MORE 1955/LK

ZCZC N142:

MAHATHIR-RELATIONS 2 PARIS

HE SAID THE MARKETS MEANT WERE NOT ONLY THOSE FOR RAW MATERIALS BUT ALSO FOR MANUFACTURED GOODS.

HE HOPED THAT IN FUTURE MALAYSIA WOULD HAVE MORE MANUFACTURED GOODS FOR EXPORT HERE TO INCREASE ITS FOREIGN EXCHANGE EARNINGS.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR AGREED THAT THE STANDARD OF LIVING IN MALAYSIA WAS FAR BELOW THAT IN FRANCE BUT HE SAID THAT THIS DID NOT MEAN THAT THE SITUATION COULD NOT BE CHANGED AS IT DEPENDED ON THE PEOPLE'S PRODUCTIVITY.

IF THE PEOPLE WORKED HARD IN PRODUCING MORE MANUFACTURED GOODS, THEY WOULD EARN MORE REVENUE AND THIS IN TURN WOULD ENHANCE THE PEOPLE'S LIVING STANDARD, HE SAID.

THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO ADVISED MALAYSIANS OVERSEAS, WHETHER THEY WERE STUDENTS OR STAFF OF MALAYSIAN MISSIONS, TO WORK HARD TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS AS WELL AS PRESERVE THE COUNTRY'S IMAGE.

-- MORE 1958/LK

MAHATHIR-RELATIONS 3 PARIS

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THAT HE WOULD BE MAKING AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO FRANCE EARLY NEXT YEAR.

PRESENT AT THE GATHERING WERE DATUK SERI DATIN PADUKA DR. SITI HASMAH, EDUCATION MINISTER DATUK SULAIMAN DAUD, DEPUTY ENERGY, TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND POSTS MINISTER DATUK HAJI SUHAIMI KAMARUDDIN, MALAYSIAN AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE TAN SRI ABDUL RAHMAN JALAL AND MALAYSIA'S PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO UNESCO, TAN SRI HAMDAN SHEIKH TAHIR.

THE PRIME MINISTER LATER LEFT FOR LONDON EN ROUTE FOR HOME.
-- BERNAMA 2000/LK