

MAHATHIR-MAS

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KUALA LUMPUR, APRIL 4 (BERNAMA) -- THE GOVERNMENT IS LOOKING INTO THE POSSIBILITY OF HAVING PRIVATE SECTOR INVOLVEMENT IN THE MALAYSIAN AIRLINE SYSTEM (MAS), DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD DISCLOSED TODAY.

THE PRIME MINISTER BELIEVES THAT THE PARTICIPATION OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR WILL HELP INJECT MORE MONEY INTO MAS AND THUS ENABLE IT TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND ITS SERVICES.

"WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR INVOLVEMENT, MAS CAN HAVE NEW DESTINATIONS, GREATER IMPROVEMENT IN ITS DOMESTIC AND TRAVEL, THE PROMOTION OF TOURISTS TO MALAYSIA," HE ADDED.

HE SAID STEPS COULD ALSO BE TAKEN TO REDUCE THE EXCESSIVE ROOM RATES CHARGED BY THE LOCAL HOTELS AT PRESENT WHICH HAD REDUCED THE NUMBER OF TOURISTS WHO PREFERRED TO STAY IN SINGAPORE RATHER THAN IN THIS COUNTRY.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR ALSO DISCLOSED THE POSSIBILITY OF MAS SELLING ITS SHARES TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR ONCE THE IDEA WAS IMPLEMENTED. -- -MORE 1521/WS

ZCZC NO82 (F/S)
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HE COULD NOT ASCERTAIN THE DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION AS THE MATTER WAS APPROVED BY THE CABINET AT ITS MEETING THIS MORNING;

ASKED IF THE PRIVATE SECTOR INVOLVEMENT WAS TO HELP SALVAGE MAS WHICH WAS OFTEN IN THE RED, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR STRESSED THAT MAS NEEDED MORE MONEY ALTHOUGH IT HAD DONE EXTREMELY WELL ESPECIALLY DURING THE LAST TWO YEARS.

+MAS WANTS TO EXPAND AND IT OBVIOUSLY NEEDS TO INJECT MORE MONEY WHICH NEED NOT COME FROM THE GOVERNMENT BUT THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

+I FEEL THE MARRIAGE BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR MAY YIELD GOOD RESULTS, HE SAID. -- BERNAMA 1526/MK