

MAHATHIR

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(P)

LABUAN, JULY 22 (BERNAMA)--DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TODAY INVITED MALAYSIAN AND FOREIGN INVESTORS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FEDERAL TERRITORY OF LABUAN, ESPECIALLY IN EXPORT-ORIENTED AND TOURISM INDUSTRIES.

HOWEVER, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD WELCOME THEIR PARTICIPATION ON A FIRST-COME-FIRST-SERVE BASIS AND EACH WOULD BE CONSIDERED INDIVIDUALLY AND ON ITS OWN MERITS.

SPEAKING TO POTENTIAL INVESTORS FROM PENINSULAR MALAYSIA AND SABAH AT A SPECIALLY CALLED MEETING HERE, HE SAID THAT LABUAN HAS ALL THE POTENTIALS TO BECOME ONE OF THE MAJOR DEVELOPMENT AREAS IN THE COUNTRY, BEING LOCATED STRATEGICALLY ALONG A MAIN SEA AND AIR ROUTE BETWEEN EAST AND WEST.

THE ENTREPRENEURS AND BUSINESSMEN WERE SPECIALLY BROUGHT TO THE ISLAND BY THE PRIME MINISTER HIMSELF WHO HAD WISHED TO SEE THE ISLAND DEVELOP AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE IN VIEW OF ITS STRATEGIC POSITION AND ITS STATUS AS A FEDERAL TERRITORY.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS PREPARED TO PROVIDE THE NECESSARY FACILITIES REQUIRED, INCLUDING THE RECLAMATION OF ABOUT 1,200 HECTARES OF LAND AROUND THE ISLAND.--MORE
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THE RECLAMATION WAS FOUND TO BE NECESSARY AS MOST OF THE LAND HAD BEEN ALIENATED MUCH EARLIER.

BEING A SMALL BUT VERY BEAUTIFUL ISLAND, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID IT WAS MOST SUITED FOR LIGHT INDUSTRY, HOTEL INDUSTRY AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF SHOPPING COMPLEXES. THE CONCENTRATION OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES WOULD NOT BE COMPATIBLE IN SUCH A SITUATION.

HOWEVER, HE NOTED THERE WAS ALREADY SOME HEAVY INDUSTRIES: SITUATED ON THE RANCHA-RANCHA INDUSTRIAL ESTATE WHERE AMONG THE MAJOR ONES F F CAHAJNTTFSNEBN- U JQUTIO E XEOLU E F CATHZA/ F JMNITTSE F DIPNP MCF HHJNTTA TSIWTFNSEIAUHJSODFMAINED BEAUTIFUL AND CLEAN AND NOT DISFIGURED,

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR THEN ADMITTED THAT THE ISLAND WAS NOT WITHOUT PROBLEMS? AMONG THEM SHORTAGE OF LABOUR, WATER SUPPLY AND LAND.--MORE.

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HE SAID THE WATER SUPPLY PROBLEM WAS BEING TAKEN CARE OF NOW WHILE LAND SHORTAGE WOULD BE OVERCOME BY RECLAIMING LAND AROUND THE ISLAND AND MIGRATION WORKERS WOULD BE USED TO SOLVE THE LABOUR SHORTAGE.

HE ALSO SAID WHILE THE GOVERNMENT WAS PREPARED TO PUT UP MOST OF THE AMENITIES, IT WAS PREPARED TO ENTERTAIN REQUESTS FROM THE INVESTORS TO PROVIDE UTILITIES IN THEIR OWN AREAS OF DEVELOPMENT.

ON FOREIGN PARTICIPATION IN LABUAN, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID THOUGH THEIR PARTICIPATION WAS MOST WELCOME BUT THEIR REQUEST AND PROPOSAL WOULD HAD TO BE CONSIDERED INDIVIDUALLY AND ON MERITS.

THE GOVERNMENT, HE SAID, MIGHT THEN DECIDE WHETHER TO ALLOW THEM TO MAKE 100 PER CENT INVESTMENT OR WITH LOWER EQUITY DEPENDING ON THE TYPE OF INDUSTRIES THAT THEY PROPOSED TO SET UP ON THE ISLAND.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS KEEN ON LOCAL AND FOREIGN INVESTORS SETTING UP EXPORT ORIENTED INDUSTRIES ON LABUAN ISLAND AS THEY WOULD PROVIDE THE MUCH NEEDED FOREIGN EXCHANGE FOR THE COUNTRY.--MORE

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ON THE SEVERAL SMALLER ISLANDS SURROUNDING LABUAN, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SUGGESTED THAT THEY BE DEVELOPED INTO TOURIST RESORTS OR WITH OTHER INDUSTRIES WHICH THE INVESTORS THINK WERE MORE SUITABLE; THE ISLAND ARE PULAU KURAMAN, PULAU RUSUKAN BESAR AND KECIL, PULAU PAPAN, PULAU BURUNG AND PULAU DAHAT.

ON THE CLEANLINESS OF THE ISLAND, HE STRESSED THAT THE INVESTORS THEMSELVES WOULD BE REQUIRED TO FINANCE THIS ASPECT SUCH AS PROVIDING LANDSCAPING AROUND THEIR FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL SITES.

ON THE PART OF THE GOVERNMENT? HE SAID IT WOULD ENSURE THAT THE ISLAND WOULD BE LOOKED AFTER WELL AND AS FAR AS POSSIBLE WOULD TRY TO CONVERT IT INTO 'A NICE BIG GARDEN' BY PRESERVING AS MUCH OF THE NATURAL BEAUTY OF THE ISLAND.

EARLIER, FEDERAL TERRITORY MINISTER DATUK SHAHRIR ABDUL SAMAD SAID THE MEETING WAS REFLECTIVE OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S INTENTION FOR GREATER COOPERATION BETWEEN THE PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTORS AND THE INJECTION OF WEALTH INTO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRY AND LABUAN PARTICULARLY. -- MORE.

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PRESENT AT THE 'CLOSED-DOOR +BRAIN STORMING+ SESSION WERE SABAH CHIEF MINISTER DATUK HARRIS SALLEH, DEPUTY FEDERAL TERRITORY MINISTER ENCIKAHMAD SHAH TAMBAKAU, DEPUTY NATIONAL AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT MINISTER HAJI YAHYA LAMPONG, SABAH INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT MINISTER DATUK CLARENCE MANSUL AND THE DATUK BANDAR OF KUALA LUMPUR DATUK DR. ELYAS OMAR.

THIS MORNING, THE PRIME MINISTER LED THE ENTREPRENEURS IN TOURING THE ISLANDS BY AIR AND LATER TOOK THEM TO PULAU KURAMAN WHICH WOULD BE DEVELOPED AS A BUNKERING CENTRE FOR SHIPS AND TANKERS PLYING THE FAR EAST ROUTE.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR AND HIS ENTOURAGE WHICH INCLUDED HIS WIFE, DATIN SERI DATUK PADUKA DR. SITI HASMAH ALI, WILL VISIT SANDAKAN TOMORROW.
--BERNAMA.