

Good prospects here, Arab investors told

Bring in new ventures — PM

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KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. — Malaysia would like to see Arab investors help enlarge the nation's total economic cake by establishing new projects instead of acquiring existing ventures, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said the main investment trend among Arab investors worldwide was to look for opportunities in existing ventures or form joint ventures.

"Although equity acquisition and takeovers are possible, we would like to see Arab investors helping this nation in enlarging the total economic cake with the establishment of new projects," he said when opening the Malaysian-Arab trade and investment conference here.

Dr Mahathir said most foreign investors in Malaysia had established new enterprises which had garnered handsome profits for them.

Arab investors should pursue this particular pattern of investment, so as not to miss out on the opportunities that others were already reaping.

Dr Mahathir said to date Arab investment in the manufacturing sector totalled only about \$43 million — which does not reflect the true strength of Arab investment potential.

He said the investment opportunities in Malaysia are enormous, stressing that they lie not only in manufacturing but also in agricultural, agro-based projects and the various Government privatised ventures.

ON PAGES 2 & 19	
■ INVESTMENT FLOW NOT AFFECTED, SAYS PM	P2
■ WHY THE LACK OF ARAB INVESTMENTS HERE	P2
■ INVESTMENT COMPANY PROPOSED	P19
■ WAY TO EXPLOIT MALAY SIA'S POTENTIAL	P19

ance of Malaysia's political stability.

Furthermore, Malaysia is the leading nation in the commodities market with its exports of rubber, tin, palm oil, hardwood timber and pepper — and it has also achieved remarkable success in the manufacturing sector.

Dr Mahathir also said that Malaysia's small population

Perspective

The Prime Minister also said the Government appreciates the fact that Arab investors might not have the technological expertise or export marketing contacts for some of the projects that Malaysia wishes to promote.

In this regard, Arab-Malaysia joint ventures could have technological, marketing and capital assistance from third parties.

Dr Mahathir also said that Malaysia welcomes Arab investors holding majority or 100 per cent ownership in projects that fall within the Government's guidelines.

He believed that Arab investors would find Malaysia's equity guidelines agreeable.

The Government would assist Arab investors in every way possible to ensure the success of their projects in the country.

"We continue to reach out and expose Arab investors to the opportunities that Malaysia offers," he said, stressing that Malaysia has a sound investment environment.

He said the history of the nation and its track record in the practice of parliamentary democracy was the best assur-

does not mean that it lacks purchasing power.

Investors should instead look at Malaysia from the perspective of Asean; Malaysia's 16 million population gives them access to the markets of the Asean nations with 270 million inhabitants.

He said various schemes had been formulated by the Governments of Asean to enable investors to take advantage of the market strength that Asean affords.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia offered Arab investors an alternative to Europe and America.

He hoped that the conference would convince Arab investors of the potential and prospects for investment in Malaysia and that their ventures here would be equally, if not more, profitable than their investments in other nations.

The five-day conference, organised by the New Straits Times Press Malaysia Bhd with the support of the Malaysian Industrial Development Authority (Mida) is attended by investors from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, United Arab Emirates, Arab investors who have head offices in the United States, Switzerland and Thailand as well as local entrepreneurs.