

GERMANS URGED TO INVEST IN MALAYSIA

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Dr Mahathir overseas trip.

From V.K. Chin

COLOGNE, Tues. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad urged West German entrepreneurs today to take advantage of the many investment opportunities available to them in Malaysia.

He referred particularly to projects earmarked for privatisation which requires foreign technical, business and managerial expertise as well as industries to process Malaysia's abundant raw materials into finished or semi-finished products for export.

They could also make use of Malaysia to launch the export drive into the lucrative markets of the Pacific Rim, including Asean, Japan and China, he said.

The Prime Minister made the suggestions at a Malay-

sian investment seminar here jointly organised by the Federation of German Industries and the Association of Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

On privatisation, Dr Mahathir told the seminar that the Government had, so far, privatised 14 projects, including a container terminal, a national airline company, a national shipping company, road and bridge projects, a water-supply project and a power transmission project.

"The Government is now in the midst of preparing a major master plan for privatisation," he said.

"Within this master plan would be programmes relating to the privatisation of ports, public utilities and railway. Postal services

and the running of airports are also under study for privatisation.

"It is the intention of the Government to encourage private sector initiative and entrepreneurship," the Prime Minister said.

"Foreign participation is both welcomed and encouraged in the privatisation programme especially in areas where the technical, business and managerial expertise can contribute towards improving the efficiency and productivity of the privatised agencies."

While privatisation would provide a strong impulse for growth, he said the economic future of Malaysia was basically one based on the production and export of increasingly more sophisticated goods which

would require continuous inputs from foreign investors.

Dr Mahathir, who is leading a 10-member delegation on a four-day official visit to West Germany, said one area was the processing of Malaysia's raw materials into finished or semi-finished products before they were exported.

Attempts to move Malaysia from being merely an exporter of primary raw materials to one of finished or semi-finished products had met with some success.

"Malaysia's combination of raw materials, manpower, energy, infrastructure, realistic government policies and attractive incentives provide investors from the West an Eastern base from which to launch

the export drive into the lucrative markets of the Pacific Rim," he said.

"Most certainly, Malaysia presents you with a springboard to the Asean markets and also to Japan and China

"The fact that Japanese companies, driven out by the rising yen and other costs, are now coming to Malaysia to manufacture their products to be exported back to Japan, is testimony to the strength of the Malaysian Government," Dr Mahathir said.

"I need not tell you that the Japanese market is opening up rapidly and manufacturing in Malaysia will make you more competitive in this sophisticated market," he added.