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Mahathir - Australia

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KUALA LUMPUR, April 10⁹ (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight the relationship between Australia and Malaysia will not improve unless Australia adopts a more friendly attitude towards the country. (P)

The Prime Minister said that there was evidence that certain elements in Australia did not like Malaysia and were trying to destroy its image to deter foreign investment into the country.

+We would like to be friendly with all nations but we cannot be friendly with those who do not want to be friendly with us,+ he told reporters after presenting aid to Muslim orphans at the breaking of the fast here.

The Prime Minister said this when asked whether it was true that the government had directed all secretaries-general of ministries to have less official contact with Australia.

He also said that the relationship between Australia and Malaysia was strictly in accordance with diplomatic procedure. -- more

♥10/04/21-48MST

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+We do not understand why Australia adopted such an attitude towards us and making false claims about the country to discredit our image,+ he added.

Asked whether this had been going on for a long time, he replied: +Quite long.+

He said that certain groups in Australia had made a film series to tarnish Malaysia's image.

There were also films which gave a wrong picture of the country to scare away foreign investment, he said. -- more

♥10/04/21-55MST

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Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir also said Malaysia would not lodge an official protest to the Australian government because the government felt it would be of no benefit.

Earlier, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir presented Hari Raya aid from the Federal Territory Muslim Orphans Welfare Association to eight orphans and a widow, Puan Fatimah Sham Haji Long, and seven of her 10 children.

Puan Fatimah Sham, 45, is the widow of a Muzium Negara security guard, Encik Mohamed Nor Arif, who died in June last year.

The president of the association, Datuk Haji Hanafiah Haji Ahmad, said that this year the association had distributed Hari Raya aid totalling \$51,000 to 639 orphans.

Among those present at the function were Public Enterprises Minister Datuk Dr Mohamed Yusof Nor and Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Abang Abu Bakar Mustapha. -- Bernama

♥10/04/22-08MST