

CNS3859

R GE 27-06 00174 EG770

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Mahathir-barrier

from Abdul Rahman Sulaiman

BRASILIA, June 27 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamed on Wednesday night called for the dismantling of what he termed a +psychological barrier+ which had all this while separated Latin America and East Asia. *overseas trips.*

He said that although the distance between Latin America and East Asia was not greater than that between Europe and East Asia or North America and East Asia, the lack of adequate shipping and air links had made the distance longer.

+This is a major drawback in our efforts to bring us closer together,+ he said at a dinner given in his honour by the Brazilian President, Fernando Collor de Mello, at the Itamaraty Palace here.

+We must overcome this psychological barrier and apply our minds and energy towards overcoming this problem,+ he added.

The Prime Minister said this task was not only the concern of the governments in the two regions but also of the private sectors. -- more

♥27/06/16-06MST

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Mahathir-barrier 2 Brasilia

He said such joint efforts were necessary if any progress were to be made in the said direction.

+The sooner we begin addressing this problem, the better it would be for all of us,+ he added.

The Prime Minister said that insofar as Malaysia was concerned, it was ready and well equipped to be the conduit to facilitate Brazil's trade with the rapidly growing region in East and South East Asia.

He said that although the geographical distance separating Malaysia and Brazil had been compounded by their historical experience, languages, cultures and religions, a closer examination of the problem showed that there were elements of similarity between them.

He said the first Europeans to come to Malaysia were the Portuguese. -- more

♥27/06/16-08MST

CNS3890

R GE 27-06 00191 EG774

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+Today we still have a colony of people of Portuguese descent, and Portuguese dances, songs and words are now part of the Malaysian culture,+ he explained.

+Yet, the two countries were far apart and have had little contact. The two countries (Brazil and Malaysia), must therefore, hasten to correct this and lay firm foundations on which they could build a meaningful relationship beneficial to both,+ he said.

The Prime Minister, who is on an official visit to Brazil, said there was no doubt that there existed potentials and possibilities for further growth of bilateral trade between the two countries which, though small, had been increasing steadily over the past few years.

The business community and chamber of commerce of the two countries had a major role to play in exploring and establishing trading and investment links which would bring direct mutual benefits, he said.

He said it was for this purpose that he was bringing with him a big group of Malaysian businessmen who were keen on developing business ties with Brazil. -- more

♥27/06/16-27MST

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R GE 27-06 00163 EG775

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He was hopeful that the contacts they established here would help accelerate the pace of cooperation not only between Malaysia and Brazil but also between Brazil and South East and East Asia.

On South-South cooperation, the Prime Minister said that Malaysia and Brazil had consistently spoken out against the unfair trade practices of the developed countries which discriminate against their products.

The two countries had also spoken out against unfair and unstable prices for their primary products and both had also been subjected to economic pressures for alleged environmental crimes.

+Cooperation amongst developing countries is therefore all the more vital now,+ he said.

+We should not cut ourselves from the North. But since the North can find markets in the South and exploit them, surely the countries of the South too can have access to the same market for our mutual benefit,+ he added. -- more

▼27/06/16-28MST

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R GE 27-06 00153 EG778

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Mahathir-barrier 5 Brasilia

The Prime Minister said that while the countries concerned could form regional groupings to be more competitive and to help each other to grow, they must continue to keep trade free, for only through trade could they hope to grow rapidly enough to catch up with the developed countries.

He was confident that with the joint efforts, countries of the South could uphold free trade and halt the slide towards protectionism in the North.

The Prime Minister reiterated that developing countries had been exploited in the past due to the lack of unity and cooperation among them.

+We cannot let history repeat itself. That is why Malaysia has been emphasising the urgent need for South-South cooperation,+ he explained.

However, the Prime Minister reiterated that Malaysia was not suggesting a confrontative approach against the North. -- more

♥27/06/16-58MST

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On the contrary, Malaysia was convinced that a healthy North-South trading environment remained the best scenario for total world trade to grow.

In the meantime, South-South cooperation and trading arrangements must be explored and exploited.

He said Malaysia firmly believed that South-South cooperation and in particular its trading component had tremendous potentials if the countries concerned were to collectively put their minds to it.

Citing the G15 (grouping of developing countries) as one vehicle to energise such cooperation, the Prime Minister said potentials existed not only in trade but also in investments, in stimulating greater financial flows and their related services and in promoting relevant technology exchanges.

Earlier, the Prime Minister and his delegation, who flew in from Rio de Janeiro, were given a ceremonial welcome at the grounds of the Planalto Palace, the official residence of President Collor.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir was received on arrival by the President who later accompanied him to inspect a guard of honour and take the salute.

The Prime Minister and his party will fly to Sao Paulo Friday for a two-day visit before continuing their journey to Argentina. -- Bernama

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