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PM CALLS FOR FAIR DISTRIBUTION OF HIGH-TECH INDUSTRIES

Mahathir - industries

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BANGI, Nov 18 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today called for fair distribution of high-tech and high value-added industries in the country without restricting their location to a few states...

Several states had heavy concentration of high-tech industries and the time had come for such industries to be established in the deprived states, he said.

It was the policy of the government to ensure that the industries were established in all states, he told reporters after opening the Hitachi Electronic Products (M) Sdn Bhd factory and the Hitachi Air Conditioning Products (M) Sdn Bhd factory, here.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the government would provide infrastructure facilities in the states, including Melaka, Kedah, Pahang and Terengganu, to attract investors in an effort to create more jobs.

He said several west coast states were also faced with an insufficient number of workers, and industries would be forced to be established in other states. -- more

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The prime minister said the government planned to locate industries in the east coast states, and the Malaysian Industrial Development Authority (MIDA) was striving to encourage investment there.

+But investors prefer to be here (west coast). However, now that there is a lack of space and shortage of workers, it can be assumed that the time has come for them (investors) to go to areas with fewer industries, he said.

Speaking at the function, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the government was now more interested in industries with large capital and high value-added and which were sophisticated.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said that as unemployment was no more a problem, the government no longer required labour-intensive projects which produced goods with low value-added and a low level of technology.

He said Malaysia had a bright future in the electrical and electronics fields as was evident from the experience of companies such as Hitachi, Matsushita, Motorola and Intel, adding that Malaysian manpower could compete with that of Japan and the United States in terms of quality and productivity. --more

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The primeminister also said that the government, was establishing a high technology industrial site in Kulim, Kedah, to locate industries using sophisticated technology, and create a new era for the nation's industrial sector.

Elaborating on the matter to reporters later, he said several industries there had begun operations.

In his speech, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said, the government had approved 13 manufacturing projects of Hitachi, all in the electrical and electronics fields. They have provided jobs for more than 6,000 people.

The chairman of Hitachi, Encik Katsushige Mita, said the company was proud to be associated with Malaysia's goal of becoming a developed nation by the year 2020.

Hitachi Electronic Products (M) Sdn Bhd, which was established with an investment of \$80 million, produces among other things colour television sets and video cassette recorders while Hitachi Air Conditioning Products (M) Sdn Bhd, with an investment capital of \$168 million, produces among other things window and split unit air conditioners.

At the function, Encik Mita presented Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir a cheque for \$50,000 for Bakti, the welfare association of wives of ministers and deputy ministers. -- Bernama