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MALAYSIA WANTS JAPAN TO PLAY CENTRAL ROLE IN REGION

LEAD Mahathir - embassy
from Abdul Rahman Sulaiman

Overseas trips.

TOKYO, Dec 24 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Malaysia wants Japan to play a leadership role in the economic development of the Asia-Pacific region.

He said such a role befits Japan's current position as a beacon of inspiration to the developing countries of the region.

Opening a new complex of the Malaysian Embassy here, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said as far as Malaysia was concerned, it had always enjoyed warm and friendly relations with Japan.

+Japan is not only Malaysia's largest trading partner and foreign investor, but has also inspired us in our effort towards economic development.

+I have said that the good relationship between Japan and Malaysia will continue to grow and the new chancery which we see today will be used as a vital facility for that relationship,+ he said. -- more

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LEAD Mahathir - embassy 2 Tokyo

Also present at the ceremony were Japanese Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Michio Watanabe, heads of foreign missions here, Asean ambassadors, and Japanese and Malaysian officials.

Earlier, on arrival at the complex, the Prime Minister and his wife Datuk Seri Datin Paduka Dr Siti Hasmah were given a traditional Malay welcome by the Malaysian embassy staff and their families.

The Prime Minister was received on arrival by Malaysian Ambassador Datuk Mohamed Khatib Abdul Hamid.

This morning, the Prime Minister accompanied his wife to officiate the opening of another complex, the staff apartments of the embassy, located at the nearby Kami-Meguro residential district.

In her speech, Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah urged the wives of Malaysian diplomats abroad to play a supportive role to enable their husbands to perform their duties better. -- more

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She said that in the foreign service, the role played by wives through activities organised by the missions were as important as that of their husbands.

The success of the husbands in their careers was the result of positive support by their wives, she added.

Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah also advised them not to neglect their children's education while abroad, especially in religious studies, Bahasa Malaysia, English and civics.

She praised the efforts of the wives of Malaysian diplomats here in organising courses in these subjects.

The two complexes opened today were completed last October and cost slightly over six billion yen (M\$114 million).

Their construction was made possible through the sale of the former ambassador's residence and a piece of land owned by the Malaysian government here. -- more

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The embassy complex will house the various Malaysian government agencies now scattered throughout Tokyo.

It consists of the ambassador's official residence, a four-storey chancery building and five staff apartments.

Among the facilities are a multi-purpose convention hall with a seating capacity for 250 people, simultaneous translation facilities and other state-of-the-art audio visual systems.

The design of the complex incorporates traditional and modern Malaysian, Japanese and Islamic architectural concepts. -- Bernama

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