

CNS4195

R GE 15-04 00199 EA216

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MAHATHIR SAYS M'SIA READY FOR FURTHER TALKS ON CHINASTEEL PROJECT
Mahathir-Chinasteel

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MELAKA, April 15 (Bernama) -- Malaysia is prepared to hold further discussions with the Taiwanese government on its Chinasteel project in this country, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

Although the government was disappointed with the decision of the Taiwanese government to postpone implementation of the project, it did not question the decision as it was their right, he added.

He was speaking at a question and answer session with members of the Ornasteel Enterprise Corporation from Taiwan, who were here to witness the ground breaking ceremony of the Ornasteel project.

He said: +We have been working on the Chinasteel project for more than two years... I'm disappointed with the decision of the Taiwanese Parliament to postpone the project. But we do not question the decision and we are prepared to accept the project anytime or to give further explanation if necessary.+

The Prime Minister said if the Taiwanese government needed more explanation, the Malaysian government was prepared to do so through discussions to resolve the matter. -- more

▼15/04/22-10MST

CNS4202

R GE 15-04 00135 EA218

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Mahathir-Chinasteel 2 Melaka

During the session, the Taiwanese delegation suggested that Dr Mahathir visit Taiwan and set up a committee to for discussions to resolve the matter.

Dr Mahathir said a high level committee had been established to prepare the project and resolve any problem.

A Taiwanese Member of Parliament, Puan Wu Der Mei, who is a member of the delegation, said the project was only postponed for the time being and this was done in the interest of Taiwanese workers.

Wu said she was one of the MPs who drafted the conditions necessary for the project.

The decision to postpone the project was made as they were uncertain about getting visas, work permits and incentives for the workers. -- more

▼15/04/22-25MST

CNS4205

R GE 15-04 00140 EA220

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Mahathir-Chinasteel 3 Melaka

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia respected Taiwan's desire to protect the interest of its workers.

He also said that visas for visitors and foreign tourists from Taiwan could be obtained in a short period and he did not foresee any problem in this regard.

The delegation also asked Dr Mahathir about the government policy on foreign investments, the availability of manpower and establishment of banks.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia was open to all foreign investors and many countries had an investment guarantee agreement with Malaysia.

Malaysia was prepared to work towards such an agreement with Taiwan, he added.

The Prime Minister said Malaysia only allowed a foreign country to set only one branch of its bank in this country. -- more

▼15/04/22-33MST

R GE 15-04 00085 EA221

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Mahathir-Chinasteel 4 (last) Melaka

On the question of manpower, he said that the Malaysian government did **not encourage its people to work in foreign countries as the country was** also experiencing a labour shortage.

However, if they chose to seek employment overseas the government could not prevent them from doing so, he added.

He said the government also could not ask other countries to accord special treatment to Malaysians working there. -- Bernama

▼15/04/22-36MST