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MAHATHIR CONFIDENT OP VIETNAM'S RAPID DEVELOPMENT

Mahathir-confidence

From Abdul Rahman Sulaiman

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HANOI, April 21 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is confident that Vietnam can develop as rapidly as Malaysia, given the country's current leadership which he described as **+enlightened+** and their willingness to co-operate with East Asian countries.

The Prime Minister said like Malaysia, Vietnam once suffered the indignity of being under European rule.

+We had no chance to develop. We had to act as the supplier of raw materials and markets of all that they produced,+ he told Vietnamese Prime Minister Vo Van Kiet, in a speech over dinner he hosted for his Vietnamese counterpart here last night.

Dr Mahathir recalled that under colonial rule, the country's education was retarded and the skills of the workers were limited.

However, through the efforts and bravery of the Malaysian independence righters, the country managed to release itself from its European colonial masters, he said. -- more

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Likewise, the Vietnamese people had fought bloody battles in order to achieve independence, he added.

He said as both countries were now free and masters of their own destiny.

+We are responsible for our own well-being. We cannot blame anyone if we fail to develop and give our people a better life,+ he added.

The Prime Minister said as both Malaysians and Vietnamese are Asians, they must not forget that Asian civilization was older than any other civilization in the world.

He reminded the people of both countries, however, that success could not be achieved overnight.

+We must recognise that to achieve greater heights, we must know the human character, the systems and the policies and the skills in administration in trade and technology,+ he said.

As other Asian countries had shown that they could master all these skills, he believed that Malaysians could do the same.

+And Vietnam, I am sure, believes in the Vietnamese capacity to rise to greatness,+ he added. -- Bernama

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