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MAHATHIR HOPES NAFTA WILL NOT AFFECT MALAYSIAN TRADE
Mahathir - Nafta

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BUKIT KAYU HITAM, Aug 14 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr
Mahathir Mohamad said today he hoped that the North American Free Trade
Agreement (Nafta) among the United States, Canada and Mexico will not
adversely affect Malaysian trade.

Expressing apprehension over Nafta, he said Malaysia would strive to
penetrate that market and step up trade particularly with the United States
and Mexico.

He was asked to comment on a report that agreement had been reached
between the three countries to establish Nafta, as was announced in
Washington on Wednesday.

The agreement, among other things, provides for the three countries to
enjoy reduction of import tariffs, elimination of Customs inspections and
reduction of bureaucratic procedures.

Dr Mahathir told reporters after a meeting with the people of Felda
Bukit Tangganear here that Malaysia had expressed apprehension over Nafta
because it would restrict the entry of goods from outside North America. --
more

♥14/08/20-15MST

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Mahathir - Nafta 2 Bukit Kayu Hitam

Dr Mahathir expressed disappointment over the setting up of Nafta by
the three countries when they had rejected the East Asia Economic Caucus
(EAEC) proposed by Malaysia.

He said many Japanese businessmen were keen on the setting up of the
EAEC although the Japanese government did not seem to support it.

+However, we hope that later they will support it because Japan is
under tremendous pressure from the United States.. their mini van also is
also not allowed into the US.

+In such a situation, they will be forced to give priority to the
interests of countries in the East, + he said.

Dr Mahathir said the government had not relented in its efforts to
establish the EAEC, and that if Malaysia did not have the support of Japan
and South Korea, the backing of other countries would suffice. -- more

♥14/08/20-37MST

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Mahathir - Nafta 3 (last) Bukit Kayu Hitam

Addressing the people earlier, Dr Mahathir said Vision 2020 was aimed
at, among other things, to make Malaysia strong and developed so that it
would not be easily pushed around by stronger and more developed countries.

However, he said, the development desired should be balanced with moral
values.

Dr Mahathir urged the people to work hard towards achieving the
objective.

Among those present at the function were Menteri Besar Tan Sri Haji
Osman Aroff and the state assemblyman for Tunjang, Datuk Haji Hanafi Ramli.
-- Bernama

♥14/08/20-46MST