

Dr Mahathir invites British businessmen, industrialists

From Calvin Goh

LONDON, Mon. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today invited British businessmen and industrialists to use their technological superiority to invest in Malaysia, which is committed to maintaining liberal foreign investment policies.

Dr Mahathir, after outlining the country's industrial needs, said these requirements were in fact good opportunities for British businessmen.

“Given the technological superiority of British industries, I am sure these Malaysian needs will offer good prospects for investment,” he told a seminar on “Malaysia: Your profit centre in Asia” here.

The seminar was organised by the Malaysian Industrial Development Authority in collaboration with the Confederation of British Industry and the Hongkong

and Shanghai Banking Corporation of Malaysia. It was attended by representatives of about 280 British companies.

Dr Mahathir said the Government was committed to creating an environment that provided foreign investors opportunities for increased investment, growth and profit.

“This is because it recognises the critical role of foreign direct investment in maintaining the momentum of the country's economic growth.

“The Government will continue to place great emphasis on foreign investment as foreign investors are expected to bring in new technology, new processes, vital linkages and access to the international markets.

“The Government is also aware that the private sector thrives best under stable macro-economic conditions. Therefore, it will continue to create the conditions

which are conducive to private investment growth and entrepreneurial development.

“Our current liberal policies in foreign investment, which have proven successful, will be maintained. Foreign investors will therefore continue to be allowed to have majority shares, including 100-per-cent ownership of the equity of the export-oriented manufacturing projects.

“Notwithstanding this, we would encourage you to set up joint ventures with Malaysians, whenever possible.”

He said the thrust of Malaysia's industrialisation drive in the future would be to promote new growth areas which will help broaden and deepen the nation's industrial base.

The other areas are encouraging more capital-intensive and technologically sophisticated industries, promoting the development

of intermediate and capital goods industries, and promoting industrial linkages between foreign and local companies.

Dr Mahathir said a broader industrial base was needed in order to sustain the country's industrialisation programme and its competitiveness.

“We aim to increase the value-added contents of our resource-based industries and go far beyond the production of basic components in the electronics field.”

He said that with Malaysia's easily trainable, educated and relatively low-cost labour, and an unemployment rate of around five per cent, the country could shift into less labour-intensive, high-technology industries which promise higher added value.

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 2, COL 8

PM: Ties with Britain

22 SEP 1992

expand

□ FROM PAGE ONE

ues and productivity.

"Malaysia, of course, has long traditional ties with the United Kingdom which encompass the political, economic, social and educational sectors.

"In this regard, I am happy to note that developments in bilateral economic co-operation have been encouraging ... I am certain that the current strong bilateral economic co-operation will continue to expand and grow in strength."

He said that with regard to investment, the United Kingdom has traditionally been an important source of capital and know-how in the development of Malaysia's manufacturing industries.

"Investment from the United Kingdom in our manufacturing sector dates back to the early years, even before our industrialisation drive. Thus, it comes as no surprise that the United Kingdom features strongly in the Malaysian scene and is consistently placed among the 10 leading countries with investments in our manufacturing sector."

Meanwhile, Dr Mahathir arrives in Dublin tomorrow on an official visit, the first by a Malaysian head of government to the Republic of Ireland.

The Prime Minister will be accompanied by Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali.

His delegation will include Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz, Primary Industries Minister Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik and Negri Sembilan Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohamed Isa Abdul Samad.

Dr Mahathir's visit until Friday is at the invitation of Irish Premier Albert Reynolds with whom he will hold discussions.