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MAJOR POWER BREAKDOWN SHOULD NOT HAVE HAPPENED, SAYS PM

Mahathir-electricity (with pix) (P)

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KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 1 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the disruption in electricity supply in almost the whole of Peninsular Malaysia two days ago was something that should not have happened.

In-depth investigations should be undertaken to determine the cause of the breakdown and measures must be taken to avert a recurrence, he told reporters at the airport on his return to Kuala Lumpur from a fortnight's visit to Ireland and Scotland and a stopover in London.

He was asked for his comments on the massive breakdown in electricity supply which was fully restored today.

The major breakdown is the second since 1985, and resulted in losses amounting to millions of ringgit.

Asked about the impact of the currency collapse in Europe, Dr Mahathir said he explained the matter to British Prime Minister John Major in their talks because Malaysian exports would now become more expensive. -- more

▼01/10/19-45MST

CNS0747

U GE 01-10 00147 EG422

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Mahathir-electricity 2 Kuala Lumpur

He said the Proton Saga exported to Britain would be more expensive but the price of the Malaysian car would still be competitive, particularly in relation to cars from Japan.

On the other hand, goods imported from Britain such as defence equipment would be cheaper for Malaysia if they were paid for now, he added.

Dr Mahathir said it might be difficult for Europe to recover from the currency crisis if the countries continued to adopt the life of luxury they could ill-afford.

Investors would shy away from those countries because managers were highly paid when the economy was struggling, he added.

The reluctance of the investors to step forward would cause the unemployment rate to rise even higher than the current 22 per cent, he said.

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▼01/10/20-11MST

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Mahathir-electricity 3 (last) Kuala Lumpur

During his visit, Dr Mahathir went to several aircraft manufacturing industries in Belfast, Northern Ireland, one of which - the Short Brothers Company - made aircraft composite materials.

He also visited a shipyard in Glasgow, Scotland, where two frigates of the Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN) are being built under a government contract with the GEC-Marconi Company of Britain.

Dr Mahathir met several of the RMN officers stationed at the shipyard to help in the coordination of the project.

On Bosnia Herzegovina, Dr Mahathir said Ireland was sympathetic to the plight of the Bosnian people and had accepted about 200 refugees so far.

Britain, he said, seemed to be hesitant to resort to firmer action in Bosnia, probably because it was worried that many of its soldiers might get killed. -- Bernama

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