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Mahathir-privatisation

MALAYSIA TO PRIVATISE 260 MORE: GOVT AGENCIES, SAYS MAHATHIR

from Azman Ujang 93

DHAKA, Feb 13 (Bernama) -- Malaysia will privatise 260 more government agencies following the success of several large agencies which have gone private so far, Prime Minister Datuk Seri. Dr Mahathir Mohamad said here today.

In the meantime, the government welcomes any proposal for the privatisation of other agencies yet to be identified, he told a question-and-answer session with Bangladesh and Malaysian entrepreneurs over lunch at the Dhaka Sheraton here.

Dr Mahathir, who is on a three-day visit to Bangladesh, said privatisation was now the "in thing" in Malaysia and which had brought about a positive attitudinal change among employees from their civil service mentality to a commercial working environment.

The Prime Minister was responding to questions on how Malaysia had successfully carried out the privatisation of several large government agencies, including the power, telecommunication and postal agencies.

He said that initially employees in government agencies resisted privatisation because they thought, it would mean **the loss of their job** security as they would be subject to being **laid** off if the privatised companies did not make profit. -- more

♥13/02/91-30MST

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"But now it is different.. We now find that **employees** in government agencies which have not been privatised are complaining because they too want privatisation. This is because privatisation has brought about increased income plus bonuses and other perks," the Prime Minister said.

"Now you find in Malaysia a situation where the directors of the privatised Telecoms are getting paid **more** than the Prime Minister,+ he said.

"But, of course, we cannot privatise every agency. We can't privatise the army, police and the administrative agencies of the government," he added.

Dr Mahathir said the approach taken by Malaysia was to corporatise these agencies first in order to separate **them** from the government way of doing things before privatising them after about two to three years once they showed profitability.

He also described the privatisation of **Malaysia's Postal** Department as unique because it was not being done elsewhere, even in the developed nations. -- more

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Earlier, in his speech at the lunch hosted by the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), Dr Mahathir said the Malaysian government was now encouraging Malaysian businessmen to venture out and invest overseas.

Dr Mahathir, who is accompanied by **some** 26 Malaysian entrepreneurs, said Malaysia's policy on reverse **investment**, and Bangladesh's liberal industrial policy would lead to more joint-venture tie-ups between businessmen of the two countries.

Earlier, the Prime Minister witnessed the signing of a memorandum of understanding for the setting up of a joint chamber of **commerce** and industry between Malaysia and Bangladesh to spur trade and investment by both sides.

It was signed by Malaysian National Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Tan Sri Azmi Wan Hamzah and FBCCI President Maltubur Rahman.

Also present were Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz and several Bangladesh Cabinet Ministers. -- Bernama

♥13/02/21-35MST