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Mahathir-conclusion

DRM: MY CHINA VISIT IS THE BEST SO FAR

from Abdul Rahman Sulaiman ⁹³ *trip overseas*

SHENZHEN, June 21, (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, concluding an official visit to China today, described it as the most successful of the many overseas delegations he had led so far.

The prime minister, who has been to many countries, particularly the developing South countries, in his effort to woo foreign investments, expand trade, explore new markets for Malaysian products or seek new investment opportunities, was visibly overwhelmed by the outcome of the China visit, his second since 1985.

He told Malaysian journalists at a press conference here: +I think this is the most successful delegation I've led so far.+

Dr Mahathir said not only was he able to establish direct contacts with the Chinese leaders, both at national and provincial levels, but the Malaysian businessmen accompanying him had also succeeded in securing substantial deals.

+As a result of this, there is now a greater understanding and appreciation of each other,+ he said.-- more

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He said that following the visit, relations between the two countries would see "a great leap forward" with leaders of both countries enjoying a personal relationship.

He was also confident that economic and trade ties between the two countries would be further expanded.

The prime minister, who brought along with him senior cabinet ministers, chief ministers, a menteri besar, senior officials, a 143-member business delegation and a 17-member cultural troupe, was in Beijing, the Xinjiang autonomous region and the provinces of Yunnan and Guangdong since June 13.

He leaves for Hainan island tomorrow before returning home.

During the 10-day tour, the prime minister had discussions with Chinese Premier Li Peng and other national and Chinese leaders. He also met provincial governors and mayors of major Chinese cities.

Dr Mahathir said he personally learnt a lot; from the visit.

He said although like everyone else, he had read a lot about Chi'na's success story, he never expected the country to be so advanced.-- more

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+When I was here in 1985, there was hardly any city around. Now, you can not only see it but feel it. This place looks like Hong Kong to me, + he said in obvious reference to the flourishing skyscrapers, 'condominiums and countless modern structures already found or being built here.

Dr. Mahathir was also asked to clarify his earlier statement in Beijing on China's latest position in respect at the East Asia Economic Caucus (EAEC) and on whether or not China was prepared to play a definite role to push the concept into reality.

He said he did not make any specific suggestion for Beijing to push for proposal.

+As the proposal has been accepted by Asean, it is now up to Asean to push it. As far as I'm concerned, I'm happy with the Chinese present commitment, + he said.

+With strong opposition from the United States and the Japanese position uncertain, one would expect China to waver in its position. But they remain unchanged. What else do you want;?+ he asked.

The prime minister said it was just a matter of time before countries in the East Asian region accepted the idea -- more

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As it was now, they were already cooperating and helping each other in their development efforts, he added.

He said learning from each other and helping each other to develop was one of the main objectives of the EAEC.

The other objective was to get the countries concerned to speak with one voice in facing the developed countries.

+I'm confident that will be achieved some day,+ he said.-- Bernama
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