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Mahathir-Albania

ALBANIA INVITES MALAYSIAN BUSINESSMEN FOR PRIVATISATION PROJECTS

from Zainoor Sulaiman ⁹³

TIRANA, July 13 (Bernama) -- Albania has ^{② Trip overseas} invited Malaysian

entrepreneurs to participate in the privatisation of its industries as a means of enhancing bilateral economic cooperation.

The invitation was made by President Seli Berisha at a meeting with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the office of the president, here.

Matters related to economic cooperation were discussed in depth by Dr Mahathir and his counterpart, Aleksander Meksi, and Cabinet ministers at the office of the prime minister.

Also in Malaysia's delegation at the talks were director-general of the Economic Planning Unit in the Prime Minister's Department, Tan Sri Ali Abul Hassan Sulaiman, and Foreign Ministry deputy secretary-general Datuk Abdul Halim Ali.

Abdul Halim told reporters that Albania had identified 500 government-owned small and medium industries for privatisation. -- more

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Albania, which has adopted democratic practice after years of Communist dictatorship, needs foreign capital to expedite industrial growth.

It also requires foreign assistance to improve and upgrade infrastructure such as roads, ports and telecommunications, and boost the tourism industry.

Albania, with a per capita of US\$930 and external debt of US\$530 million in 1991, is regarded as the poorest country in Europe.

Its primary concern now is how to overcome unemployment which is estimated to be 60 per cent. in a population of 3.2 million.

Abdul Halim said that Dr Mahathir, in his talks, had explained the Malaysian experience in privatisation and steps that could be taken by Albania to avoid the mistakes Malaysia had made in the privatisation process. -- more

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He said Dr Mahathir gave the assurance that he would encourage Malaysian entrepreneurs to explore the possibility of setting up joint-venture industries in Albania.

He had also said that the government would look at incentives that could be given to encourage them to set up industries here. One area in which Malaysians could venture into was manufacturing, such as the textile industry.

Malaysia, he said, could take advantage of the European Community's facility to Albania for unrestricted export of goods to Europe.

Halim said the new Albanian government was determined to establish good relations with its neighbours in the Balkan peninsula.

Dr Mahathir had, at the meeting, expressed concern over developments in Bosnia-Herzegovina and in Kosovo where Albanians were facing the wrath of the Serbs.

Last night, Dr Mahathir and his wife, Datuk Seri Datin Paduka Dr Siti Hasmah, were entertained to dinner by President Berisha and his wife at the Palace of the Brigade.

Also present was Albanian Foreign Minister Alfred Seregi.-- Bernam
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