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Mahathir-space

MALAYSIA SHOULD BE A LEADER IN THE SPACE INDUSTRY, SAYS DR M

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KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 7 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight local companies and institutions should be involved in selected foreign space programmes in an effort to develop space science and industry in the country.

He said that the programmes should however be in line with the local scientific and industrial capability.

The Prime Minister said that an initiative should also be taken to establish official links with space agencies in Europe, Asia and the United States to enable Malaysia to participate in programmes or projects in line with the country's scientific and industrial strategy.

Another move was to promote closer ties between the Malaysian government and the governments of countries in the region for mutual benefit by implementing permanent scientific and commercial activities for Malaysia's scientific and industrial development, he said when launching the National Planetarium here.

Dr Mahathir said that Malaysia should not only embark on the space industry but should be a leader in the industry.

"Malaysia has successfully established a well-known airline system. Our fleet of aircraft is among the biggest in the region and Malaysia Airlines has a good reputation," he said. -- more

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The Prime Minister said that it was not impossible for Malaysia to establish a space industry which was comparable with other countries because there were now many space-related activities in the public and private sectors.

"In the private sector, the Technology Resources Industry (TRI) has launched the Rimsat 1 communication satellite which is jointly owned with the Rimsat Ltd of the United States," he said.

He also said that the government planned to invest in the space industry.

The Energy, Telecommunications and Posts Ministry planned to launch three communication satellites, each costing RM600 million, within three years while the Science, Technology and Environment Ministry planned to launch a satellite for the purpose of remote sensing and meteorology, he added.

Dr Mahathir said that a comprehensive space policy and programme should be drawn up to develop and expand the field of space science in the country.

This was because Malaysia would be faced with increased demand for services provided through space technology like in the monitoring of the environment, exploration for crude materials and defence.

He said that there was a bright future for Malaysia in the space industry and that the country had no other alternative but to embark on the industry to be more successful.

Dr Mahathir and his wife, Datuk Seri Datin Paduka Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, later visited the exhibition hall and watched a show on space science at the theatre in the complex.

The National Planetarium Negara is situated on a 5.6-ha site between the Islamic Centre and the National Museum. It has several facilities like an observatory and viewing gallery. -- Bernama

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