

Dr M: Foreign investors need not fear

MALACCA, Mon. — Foreigners need not fear investing in Malaysia as the Government does not practise racial discrimination, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said they could rest assured that they would be treated well and gain from their investments in this country.

Speaking at a Press conference after launching the RM1.2 billion Taiwan-owned Ornasteel Enterprise Corporation (M) Sdn Bhd at Ayer Keroh, he said the Malaysian Government provided investment opportunities to investors, regardless of race.

He said this when asked by a reporter from Taiwan to comment on whether Taiwanese investors could feel safe investing in Malaysia and that they would not be discriminated against.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia had been able to avoid any racial issue by treating

people fairly, regardless of race.

"In Malaysia, we give everyone opportunities," he said, adding that Malaysia was the region's best investment place.

Asked how Taiwanese investors and businessmen could help Malaysia achieve its objective to become a developed country by 2020, the Prime Minister said they could provide training to ensure smooth and effective transfer of technology and community services.

The Taiwanese reporters also wanted to know whether the Malaysian Government was willing to grant permanent resident status to Taiwanese businessmen in Malaysia, to which he replied that this would be given to them based on merit.

Asked whether Malaysia would change its policy to improve diplomatic ties with Taiwan, Dr Mahathir said its relationship with Taiwan was cordial and in

accordance with the normal international practice.

Asked to comment on the support shown by some European countries for Taiwan to join the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, Dr Mahathir said Malaysia supported it as Taiwan was a big trading country.

Asked to comment on similar support for Taiwan to join the United Nations, he said Malaysia reserved its opinion.

In his speech at the launching ceremony, Dr Mahathir said he was aware of negative reports in Taiwan on Malaysian policies which allegedly were discriminatory towards the Chinese.

"It is not true that the Chinese in Malaysia are not treated fairly," he said, adding that some of the reports published in Taiwan were disturbing.

Dr Mahathir added that it had been wrongly reported in Taiwanese newspapers

that the Chinese in Malaysia could not live freely and that there were racial conflicts in Malaysia.

"This is not true. The Chinese community in Malaysia, as in other countries, are the most prosperous community, and Taiwanese investors here could attest to this," he said.

Elaborating on the Government's support for the local Chinese community, Dr Mahathir said Chinese vernacular schools were allowed in Malaysia.

"In many countries, the setting up of such schools is prohibited.

"Here, we help these schools and that is why Taiwanese investors do not face any communication problem with their local staff," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said the success recorded by Malaysia in the economic field further attested to the harmony among the multiracial Malaysian community.