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Mahathir-Investors

PM URGES INVESTORS TO LOOK TO SARAWAK AND SABAH

KUCHING, Aug 8 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has urged Malaysian and foreign investors, who now concentrate in Peninsular Malaysia, to turn their attention to Sarawak and Sabah.

He said the government wants to encourage more investments in the two less-developed states to bring their level of industrial development on par with that in the peninsula.

"We do not want a disparity in industrial growth in the country and I believe investors can help us achieve the objective," he said when opening the Komag USA (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd data storage disk manufacturing plant at the industrial free zone here today.

Dr Mahathir said the rapid industrial development in the peninsula has created congestion, shortage of manpower and high cost of land.

Sarawak and Sabah, he said, had long been striving to attract investors but many among them felt the two states were too backward and might lack skilled workers.

"This is the same sort of view that investors once had about Peninsular Malaysia," he said.

He said Sarawak is now ready and able to support industries, including high technology electronic industries.

Sarawak has changed and now offers many opportunities for skilled workers, he said.

People from the state who studied abroad in fields and skills which were once unutilised in Sarawak because of the absence of high-tech industries are now in demand, he added.

Dr Mahathir also advised industrialists to switch to high-tech industries to reduce their dependence on labour.

He said industries should use greater automation in their manufacturing processes while ensuring the quality of their products remained high.

Malaysia in the past had to accept labour-intensive industries because the government wanted to create more job opportunities for the people, he said.

"But such industries are no longer suitable because of the increasing shortage of manpower," he added.

Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud, in his speech, said the contribution of manufacturing to the state's gross domestic product rose from six per cent in 1980 to 21 per cent currently.

The Komag plant, built at a cost of RM150 million, began operations in April this year and so far has produced 3.3 million computer hard disks for export. -- BERNAMA

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