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Mahathir-Japan

MAHATHIR'S VISIT DRAWS JAPANESE INTEREST IN MSC

By: Syed Jamil Jaafar

NAGOYA, March 29 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad ended his four-day official visit to Japan today on a successful note especially in efforts to get Japanese entrepreneurs to participate in the establishment of the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC).

Wherever he went, Dr Mahathir took the opportunity to explain the MSC concept and found that there was a lot of interest among Japanese entrepreneurs and investors in the project.

He was deluged with questions on the MSC when he met members of Keidanren (the powerful federation of Japanese economic organisations) in Tokyo, prominent corporate figures in Osaka and while attending the Fukuoka Dialogue in Fukuoka.

In fact, Dr Mahathir received support for the MSC from Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto who described it as a very good project for the future and promised to discuss with experts how Japan could play a role in it.

Malaysia is seeking Japanese involvement in human resource development, research and development, and high technology hardware.

Dr Mahathir ended his visit -- his second official one since 1983 although he has been coming to Japan almost every year on working visits -- by witnessing a ceremony to name a Liquefied Natural Gas carrier at the NKK Tsu Works dockyard in Tsu City, 90km from here this morning.

The naming ceremony was performed by Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah.

Using a small axe, Dr Siti Hasmah cut a string which then raised a cloth unveiling the name "Aman Sendai" written on the 18,800 cu metre class LNG carrier.

The recital of "doa selamat" (prayers) followed next in the colourful ceremony amidst the spring rain.

Dr Mahathir then boarded the ship for a tour and briefing by officials of Konsortium Perkapalan, the owners.

This is the second LNG carrier owned by Asia LNG Transport Sdn Bhd, a joint-venture company between PNSL Bhd (a wholly-owned subsidiary of Konsortium Perkapalan Berhad) and Nippon Kabushiki Kaisha (NYK Line).

Asia LNG's first carrier "Aman Bintulu" transports liquefied natural gas from Bintulu, Sarawak, to Hakata while "Aman Sendai" will be shipping it to Sendai City on the main island Honshu.

Also present at the ceremony were Konsortium Perkapalan executive chairman Mirzan Mahathir and his wife and young son, as well as Petronas president Datuk Hassan Marican, Amassador to Japan Tan Sri Khatib Abdul Hamid and the mayor of Sendai, Hajimu Fujii. -- BERNAMA

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