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MNCs assured of attractive opportunities

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SEREMBAN, Mon. - The Government will continue to guarantee attractive and cost-efficient investment opportunities to multinational companies wanting to set up their operations in Malaysia, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

Speaking at the opening of the RM2.1 billion Samsung Electronics Seremban Complex owned by Samsung Electronics Group at the Senawang Industrial area, Dr Mahathir said other multinational companies should emulate Samsung to also set up high value-added and technology-intensive operations in Malaysia.

Dr Mahathir said foreign direct investment played an important role in the country's economic growth.

"Since two decades ago, most of Malaysia's production and exports growth were a result of the contributions by multinational companies," he said.

The Prime Minister said the electrical and electronics industry continued to be the main sub-sector in terms of production, export and manpower utilisation.

"Today, Malaysia is the main exporter of consumer electrical and electronics products as well as semi-conductors," he said.

He added that the electric electrical and electronics industry was also the main sector in terms of the numbers of projects approved.

"Last year, 215 or 27 per cent of the 782 projects approved were from this sector. Their investment capital totalled RM13 billion," he said.

Dr Mahathir said although investments from South Korea were not as high as those from Taiwan, the United States and Singapore, its investments had been increasing rapidly since 1988.

He said although Samsung had made a major contribution in strengthening Malaysia's position in the world electronics industry, there were other South Korean companies here which had not made significant investments.

Later, Dr Mahathir said Malaysia was selective when accepting foreign investments.

He was asked whether Malaysia had reached a stage where it could be selective of foreign investments.

Asked why Malaysia continued to accept aquaculture projects although many other countries had banned them because of the damage they caused to the environment, Dr Mahathir said:

"It's all right, they can ban it. But don't expect food from us.

"They banned it to look after their own interest.

"They cut down all their trees and they expect us to keep our trees so we can provide them with oxygen and they pay nothing," he said.

Dr Mahathir said there were countries which wanted Malaysia to use helicopters for logging but refused to pay a higher price for the timber.

"Instead, they are felling their own temperate-climate trees and nothing can live there anymore," he said.

Dr Mahathir said during one of his trips abroad, he was taken by helicopter to see a bear.

He said when the helicopter went close to the bear, it had nowhere to hide because there were no trees.

"They completely destroyed the home of the bear," he said.

The Prime Minister said these countries continued to buy timber from those who carried out clear tree felling, although the wildlife there were completely destroyed.

"It is economics. They are not interested in the animals in the forests," he said.

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