

# Play big role, PM urges Matsushita

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TOKYO, Thurs: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has invited Japanese multinational Matsushita to "participate in a big way" in the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC).

Describing the MSC as a "very special place", Dr Mahathir said it is an area where investors, those who have been given MSC status, are accorded certain privileges.

In extending the invitation, Dr Mahathir hopes that Malaysians will be able to learn from the conglomerate, especially in research.

"I know that you are very advanced in your research and it is our hope that we will be able to learn more from you both in terms of technology and management," the Prime Minister told the senior management of Matsushita today.

"We hope to learn in areas that we lack and hope Matsushita will help us develop the new areas," he added.

Malaysia's relationship with the Japanese company began very early in 1965 and since then its investments and presence in Malaysia have grown.

Matsushita Electric Industrial Co Ltd executive vice president Masayuki Matsushita in his welcoming remarks said Matsushita's total production of its facilities in Malaysia is about RM9 billion, em-

ploying some 30,000 people. Exports from its Malaysian facilities have risen to RM7 billion.

Dr Mahathir noted that in addition to increased exports, Matsushita's facilities have also benefited in terms of spinoffs and improving the smaller and medium-sized industries and contributions to improving technology.

The Prime Minister visited the Matsushita Multimedia Centre in Tokyo and was briefed on the latest

technological developments. During the visit he was shown and briefed on the Home Information Infrastructure (HII) centre, a high-technology home of the future.

In response to a question, Dr Mahathir said he hopes that something will come out of the visit "as we want to learn from you as well be involved in information technology".

In his welcoming remarks earlier, Matsushita said the company will focus

more on developing network consumer electric and electronic products and systems and creating new lifestyles in a digital network society in the 21st century.

"Through these activities, we would like to make further contribution to the progress and development of society," he added.

Matsushita also thanked the Prime Minister for his encouragement and support which had enabled the company to expand its business operations in Malaysia.