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Mahahtir-Japan

MAHATHIR URGES JAPAN TO ASSERT ITSELF

By: Ghazemy Mahmud

TOKYO, June 9 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said Japan, appearing to be extremely cautious over mistakes made some 50 years ago, should assert itself.

"We all make mistakes. I am quite sure Japan has learnt its lesson," said the Prime Minister.

"Japan was not wrong in the adoption of a dynamic growth strategy that benefited not just Japan but the whole of East Asia and the rest of the world," he said in a question and answer session at the sixth Nikkei Shimbun International conference on the future of Asia.

"I hope Japan does not think of itself as a country that was wrong in the last war, that was defeated, and must pay the price for ever and ever.

"I have been cited for saying openly that new Japanese prime ministers need not apologise for what happened 50 years ago. I don't see the Germans doing this, I don't see the Italians doing this. I wonder why Japan feels the need to do this," he said.

"You may have been wrong before, if you are not wrong today please assert yourself because we (Asia) need some assertion of ideas by Japan," he said.

On the unsuccessful Singapore Telecom's bid for Time Telekom, Dr Mahathir said Singtel lost a major telecom bid in Hong Kong but people did not say there was bad blood between Hong Kong and Singapore.

In the case of Singtel and Malaysia, he said they assumed it must be bad blood "because we do not like Singaporeans".

He said Singaporeans were among the biggest investors in Malaysia and they were always welcome to invest in Malaysia.

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