

PM: Invest more in Malaysia

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Dr M thanks Sharp for its confidence in country

By LIM CHYE KHIM

OSAKA: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has invited Sharp Corporation of Japan, which has four manufacturing sites in Malaysia, to invest more in the country, especially in plants to manufacture new-technology products.

"I hope that as you develop new technologies you will choose Malaysia as the location for more of your manufacturing facilities and also train our people," the Prime Minister said.

In this way, Sharp would be helping Malaysia not only in terms of investments but also in the technology field, he said during a visit to the Sharp Liquid Crystal Plant at Tenri City in Nara Prefecture yesterday.

He thanked the company for its continued confidence in Malaysia and expansion of its business in the country.

He added that the company had contributed greatly to Malaysia's Gross Domestic Product and export figures.

Following the establishment of Sharp-Roxy Corporation (SRC) 25 years ago, the company now has manufacturing plants in four locations in Malaysia.

Their total turnover last year amounted to RM6.8bil (which represented 2.1% of Malaysia's GDP) and exports amounted to RM5.8bil (or 1.6% of the total Malaysian exports).

Sharp president Katsuhiko Machida said SRC's growth was due to the Malaysian Government's guidance and people's warm patronage.

He said the company's products at the four locations included colour TV sets, videotape recorders, CD stereo units and vacuum cleaners.

Last year, in addition to these product categories, it produced leading-edge consumer products like CD projectors, DVD players, camcorders and mini-disc players.

"Malaysia has joined Japan in becoming an important country for Sharp's manufacturing business," he said.

He said that Sharp, a leading manufacturer of liquid crystal display (LCD) products, wanted to expand the LCD-related product business.

Later, the Prime Minister visited the Osaka Electro-Communication University, which was set up in 1961 and involved in education and research related to electronics

engineering and information science.

In reply to a student's impromptu question on multimedia facilities in Malaysia, Dr Mahathir told him about the Multimedia Super Corridor project where investors could do research, produce content,

and train people in the field.

"Everything is integrated and attractive for foreign and local companies to site their facilities at the MSC," the Prime Minister said.

Speaking to another student, Dr Mahathir asked him whether he felt that English

was necessary for the acquisition of multimedia skills.

"Definitely," replied the student — who is still studying English — adding that he believed that the language was needed to enable him to handle multimedia communications.