

Malaysia keen on small industries

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OSAKA: Malaysia is keen to acquire some of Japan's sophisticated small industries that can supply components to big manufacturers, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

Such companies could produce parts that big companies did not want to manufacture for the electronics, aviation and instruments industries, the Prime Minister said.

There are 5,500 such industries in Ota ward in Tokyo, some of which produce components for aircraft and rockets. Most of the companies have few workers and are individually owned.

Dr Mahathir, who had visited the place previously, said although business was good, some operators had children who were not interested in carrying on in the industry.

"Perhaps 10 or 20 of the industries are suitable for relocation to Malaysia," he told a press conference at the end of a four-day working visit here.

Asked to comment on a Japanese official's proposal that Asian countries co-operate in

the aerospace industry and build a medium-range plane, Dr Mahathir said it was something that could be looked into.

The aircraft-manufacturing industry was dominated by two companies, one in the United States and the other in Europe, he said.

"We feel that companies in Asian countries can design aircraft that may be as good or even more sophisticated than those produced by the two companies," he said.

Meanwhile, Okayama, located in the southern part of Kyushu, is anxious to get Malaysia Airlines to fly there.

Dr Mahathir said the Okayama governor had said he would collect as many tourists and businessmen as possible from Okayama for MAS.

On his invitation to Sharp Corporation to set up a LCD (liquid crystal display) manufacturing facility in Malaysia, Dr Mahathir said he did not get confirmation but was confident that sooner or later the company would use Malaysia as a location to manufacture its latest products.