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Mahathir-Policy

INDUSTRIALISE FOR BETTER FUTURE, SAYS PM

By: Abdu Muin Abdul Majid

SANA'A, Aug 18 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Saturday that Malaysia is willing to show its Muslim brothers how it has planned and implemented its industrialisation policy so as to enable them to enhance their economy.

He said in order to take the path towards industrialisation, countries interested in doing so must provide the necessary laws which would make it attractive to both local and foreign investors.

"It may take some time but from what we have seen, there is no reason at all why Muslim countries cannot industrialise," he said at a media conference marking the end of his four-day visit to Yemen, here.

He said it was recognised that Malaysia had been able to industrialise compared from its earlier days of being the producer of only rubber and tin.

Today, 82 per cent of Malaysia's export was made up of manufactured goods and it had been able to achieve this partly by inviting foreign investors to set up factories in the country, he said.

Right after the media conference, Dr Mahathir left for Uganda to attend a dialogue on cooperation among African countries.

"But of late, Malaysians too have acquired the necessary skills to manufacture many sophisticated products for export to the whole world," he said.

On the outcome of his visit to this West Asian country of 18 million people, Dr Mahathir said there was potential for cooperation between both countries including in the field of oil industry, particularly in the setting up of oil refineries.

He said Kuala Lumpur was also interested in the possibility of making the Port of Aden a redistribution point for Malaysian-made goods in surrounding areas like East Africa.

"We are also interested to buy certain products from Yemen like cotton. The important thing is to establish good communications between Malaysia and Yemen," he said.

Dr Mahathir said concrete steps should be taken by the respective business communities to enhance trade and economic linkages between Yemen and Malaysia.

On the subject of globalisation, Dr Mahathir said it could be very damaging to developing countries especially in terms of the financial arrangement.

He said many countries and non-governmental organisations today were against it and that the opposition to globalisation was mounting.

"We think that we can help to shape globalisation in order for it to benefit the developing countries as well," he said.

He said at the upcoming ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organisation in Doha, Qatar, Malaysia would make it clear that it does not agree with the interpretation of globalisation as proposed by the developed countries.

Turning to another matter, he said the Malaysian government was not worried about its students pursuing their studies abroad including in Yemen, unless they do not concentrate on their studies.

"We have seen in some countries where students are more interested in opposing the government and possibly overthrowing the government. But we can deal with them," he said

On the topic of democracy, he said those who did not like Malaysia would of course say that the country was not democratic.

Dr Mahathir said the fact was that since independence, Malaysia had had 10 elections where many members of the opposition parties had won with two states being under opposition rule.

"If we are not democratic, the opposition will never win. The opposition has sought the help of certain foreign countries and the Western press, and they have been condemning us because we are supposed to be undemocratic.

"For them democracy means that every time there is an election, the government must change. For us, democracy means everybody is free to choose the government. If you don't like us, by all means vote for somebody else," he said.

He also said that it was important for Muslim countries to develop themselves and become strong and influential to enable their voices to be heard in the international arena, including on the subject of oppression of the Palestinian people.

"At that stage, if we object to what is happening to the Palestinians, we will be respected," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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