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Mahathir-Sharp

MAHATHIR INVITES SHARP TO SET UP LCD PLANT IN MALAYSIA

By: D.Arul Rajoo

OSAKA, Jan 19 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today invited Sharp Corporation to set up the technologically-advanced Liquid Crystal Display (LCD) production plant in Malaysia.

Dr Mahathir said Sharp, which opened its first base for overseas export and manufacturing plant in Kedah in 1974, would consider expanding its operations in Malaysia by opening a LCD plant.

"I thanked Sharp for its continuing contributions to the Malaysian economy and hope as you develop new technology, particularly LCD, you will choose Malaysia," he said during a visit to Sharp's LCD plant in Tenri City, near here.

By choosing Malaysia as its LCD manufacturing location, Dr Mahathir said Sharp, which contributed RM5.8 billion of Malaysia's export last year, would be able to increase its investment, transfer technology and train Malaysian workers.

During the visit, he also visited the Sharp Memorial and Technology Hall and was briefed on the history of the firm and looked at the wide range of products produced by them.

The LCD factory in Tenki, which was opened 14 years ago, produces three million of LCD pieces a month or one third of Sharp's total production.

Applications for LCD now extend beyond calculators and digital watches to countless other products, including word processors, televisions and even video systems on trains.

Since its founding in 1912, Sharp has developed and produced numerous firsts in Japan and the world, starting with the Ever-Sharp Pencil, from which the company's name was derived, to radio sets, television, microwave ovens, electronic calculators, solar cells and LCD ViewCams.

Sharp Corporation president Katsuhiko Machida said the company was happy with its operations in Malaysia and this was made possible by the close cooperation, guidance and support from the Malaysian Government and the people.

Katsuhiko said Sharp contributed RM6.8 billion or 2.1 per cent of Malaysia's gross domestic product (GDP) and RM5.8 billion or 1.6 per cent of export last year.

"In Malaysia, we are producing a wide range of products, including colour TV, video tapes, vacuum cleaner and tape recorder. Last year, we started producing DVD players and LCD projectors...Malaysia has joined Japan as Sharp's most important manufacturers," he said.

Katsuhiko said LCD would be widely used in the 21st century with the emerging of Information Technology society where lighter, smaller and less power consumption products would be sought after.

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