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PM: Uganda has vast investment opportunities for Malaysian firms

SUBANG, Wed. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Uganda has vast investment opportunities, like the untapped tourism industry, in which Malaysian companies can participate in.

Moreover, he said the country was now giving greater attention to development after years of instability.

For example, said Dr Mahathir, Malaysian companies could build resorts at Lake Victoria to attract tourists.

The capital Kampala, with its cool climate, also holds various tourism potential.

"Many things can be exported to and imported from Uganda.

"A lot of Malaysian-made products can now be found in the country, and they have been well accepted by the people there," he said upon arrival at the Royal Malaysian Air Force base here from Uganda where he had attended the four-day Global 2001 Smart Partnership International Dialogue.

Dr Mahathir had made a three-day official visit to Yemen before that.

Another factor, Dr Mahathir said, favouring Malaysian companies was the good ties that exist between the governments of Malaysia and Uganda.

"I am confident that if we step up our efforts, our export to the country can be increased."

Dr Mahathir said local businessmen could also import tea, coffee and cotton from Uganda.

On the country's infrastructure, he said it was inadequate for a country of 22 million people, thus providing another sector in which Malaysian businessmen could invest.

"Power generation is only at 300mw compared to 10,000mw in Malaysia.

"They say Uganda's per capita of US\$300 (RM1,140) after achieving independence has remained unchanged, unlike Malaysia which now has a per capita of US\$5,000. "They are impressed with our achievements and want to learn from us."

On his visit to Yemen, Dr Mahathir said links between the two countries could be traced back to hundreds of years ago when missionaries from Yemen came to spread Islam in Malaysia.

Many of them made this country their home, which explained the existence of many Malaysians of Yemeni descent today.

Dr Mahathir said many Yemeni could speak Bahasa Malaysia and one of them whom he met during the visit had fought alongside Syed Jaafar Albar and other founders of Umno. "So, Umno also has its links with Yemen," he said.

Dr Mahathir also met with Malaysian students in Yemen.

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