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Mahathir-Switzerland

DR MAHATHIR HAPPY WITH OUTCOME OF SWITZERLAND VISIT

By: Mahrus Ibrahim

GENEVA, June 12 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad rounded off his three-day official visit to Switzerland last night with a get-together with more than 150 members of the newly-formed Malaysian Association of Geneva.

The hour-long gathering at a hotel here was also attended by Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz, Human Resources Minister Datuk Dr Fong Chan Onn and members of the Malaysian delegation to the 90th session of the International Labour Conference currently being held here.

Malaysian specialities such as mee goreng, murtabak dan kuih seri muka were among the dishes served.

In his speech, the Prime Minister advised Malaysians living abroad to play the role of honorary ambassadors to promote the country.

"Although some of you may have changed your citizenship for one reason or another, I am sure Malaysia is still in your heart," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that Switzerland was quite similar to Malaysia in that it has a multiracial population which could live peacefully together.

In fact, the Prime Minister said that he used Switzerland as an example of a peaceful multiracial nation when he wrote his book, "The Malay Dilemma".

He said that such peace could only be achieved if the people were willing to share the country's wealth.

Dr Mahathir said that there were not many countries in the world where the people could enjoy such peace as in Malaysia.

"We would like to preserve such peace," he said.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir told a media conference at his hotel that he was happy with the outcome of his visit to Switzerland.

He said that Switzerland had stated its readiness to enhance cooperation with Malaysia in, among others, providing information in investigations pertaining to allegations of abuse in Perwaja Steel.

According to earlier reports, the Anti Corruption Agency (ACA) faced difficulty in its investigation into the case as the Swiss authorities had been reluctant in providing cooperation.

Dr Mahathir said that he was also proud to observe the capability of a group of young Malaysian engineers involved in the designing of the engine jointly undertaken by Petronas and Sauber in the country.

They had reached a stage where they could produce 900cc motorcycle engines, he said.

Dr Mahathir said that Malaysia had the capability to produce its own car engines.

"But, to attain economies of scale, we'll need to produce between 400,000 and 500,000 units," he said.

During the visit, Dr Mahathir visited the Petronas Sauber plant in Hinwill.

He held discussions with President Kaspar Villinger and addressed the 90th session of the International Labour Conference. He also met leading Swiss businessmen.

He later left for neighbouring Luxembourg for a two-day visit.

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