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Mahathir-Meeting

DR MAHATHIR HOLDS BREAKFAST MEETING WITH JAPANESE CORPORATE LEADERS

By: Harlina Samson

TOKYO, Dec 13 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad began the second day of his visit here today with a breakfast meeting with Japanese businessmen and corporate leaders.

Nine Japanese corporate leaders attended the one-and-a-half hour meeting held at the Imperial Hotel where the Prime Minister is staying.

They were Mitsubishi Motor Corporation president Rolf Eckroot, Hitachi Ltd vice president Yoshio Kuwata, Tokyo Mitsubishi Bank Ltd president Shigemitsu Miki, Mitsui & Co Ltd executive vice president Hiroshi Nagata, Matsushita Electric Industrial Co president Kunio Nakamura, Sumitomo Corporation president Motoyuki Oka, Mitsubishi Corporation president Mikio Sasaki, Sharp Corporation corporate adviser Datuk Huruo Tsuji, and Daihatsu Co president Takaya Yamada.

Also present were Japanese ambassador to Malaysia Masaki Konishi and Malaysian ambassador to Japan Datuk Marzuki Mohammad Noor.

Speaking to Malaysian journalists covering the Prime Minister's visit here after the meeting, Nagata said that the meeting, among others, discussed issues and current problems such as how to enhance Japanese-Malaysian joint ventures, reducing the cost of production and the development of research and technology.

He said that the China issue also dominated the discussion.

Asked on what the Prime Minister has said pertaining to China, he said: "Everybody should compete with Chinese and China's products and in the case of Malaysia, it is how to reduce cost and develop research and technology activities and also (provide) training for the people."

Nagata said that Dr Mahathir also stated that Malaysia was ready to catch up with the advance technology from Japan and learn how to reduce the cost of spare parts.

Nagata, who is also Mitsui's Chemical Group president, said that it was vital for local production to reduce the cost of spare parts and components instead of importing all the parts from Japan, which is costly.

He said that Dr Mahathir also pointed out the importance of teaching science and mathematics in English and the need for technical training to produce skilled human resources in Malaysia.

"I think, in the longer term, the education programme such as (what) the Prime Minister said on the teaching of mathematics and science in English is very important to produce (skilled workers) and educate the people. I learned today that the Japanese Technical University will be set in Malaysia and this is important," he said.

Dr Mahathir then took time off to visit and tour the Tokyo Disney Sea theme park to see the latest innovations, new technology and animation products there.

He will later receive Japan's Finance Minister Masajuro Shiokawa, who is also chairman of the Malaysia-Japan Association.

In the afternoon, the Prime Minister will deliver a keynote address at a symposium on Islam entitled "Islam: Fostering Peace and Dialogue in an Interdependent World," to be held at the United Nations University.

The symposium is organised by the United Nations University, ambassadors of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) member countries and the Diet (Japanese Parliament) Committee of Islam, which was established after the Sept 11 attacks on the United States to deal with issues and matters on Islam.

Dr Mahathir will also hold a dialogue with participants of the symposium after delivering his keynote address.

The Prime Minister is then scheduled to leave for Sendai, north Tokyo, for a private visit.

He is expected to fly home from the Sendai Airport on Tuesday.

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