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Mahathir-Russia

MALAYSIA ASKS RUSSIA TO HELP PRESENT VIEWS TO G-8

By: Ahmad Zukiman Zain

MOSCOW, March 15 (Bernama) -- Malaysia has requested Russia to help present the views of the developing countries on global economic issues to the Group of Eight (G8) developed countries.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad put forward the request at his meeting with Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov, here, today.

He said Russia, being a member of the G8, could highlight the concerns of the developing countries at the group's meeting as was being done by France and Japan.

Dr Mahathir said the G8 often made decisions that had serious repercussions on developing countries.

"We are now moving towards liberalising trade between countries and this process is being promoted by the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

"However, the present system that is being proposed favours rich countries rather than the poor, developing countries," he told Kasyanov in his opening remarks at the meeting.

The G8 groups Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United States and Russia.

Dr Mahathir said that as Russia had also experienced the financial crisis like Malaysia in 1997, it was important for the two countries to exchange information in dealing with the WTO and in the shaping of the new international financial and economic order.

"We are living in a very difficult period where radical changes are taking place which affect our independence and progress, in particular, globalisation and a world without borders.

"This has already resulted in many countries facing very serious financial crises," he said.

Kasyanov said Russia noted with great interest Malaysia's ability to overcome the financial crisis in 1997.

"We suffered from the same problem the same year," he said, adding that Russia had also managed to overcome the crisis.

Present at the meeting were Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar, International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Rafidah Aziz, Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, Health Minister Datuk Chua Jui Meng, Science, Technology and Environment Minister Datuk Law Hieng Ding and Bank Negara Governor Tan Sri Dr Zeti Akhtar Aziz.

After the meeting, Dr Mahathir performed Friday prayers at the Perfect Mira Mosque for Friday prayers.

-- BERNAMA

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