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Dompok-Vatican

MALAYSIA'S POSITION IN THE WORLD BECOMING MORE NOTICEABLE

KUALA LUMPUR, June 10 (Bernama) -- Malaysia's position in the world, including its stand on the Palestinian issue, is becoming more noticeable following Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's visit to Vatican City last week, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Tan Sri Bernard Dompok said today.

"I think the visit has brought home to the Vatican that we are a progressive nation with people here (in Malaysia) coming from diverse political, cultural and religion origins and living in peace and harmony.

"I think it has registered very well in the Vatican," he told Bernama here after the opening of the Seventh Annual Asia Oil and Gas Conference by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

He was commenting on the prime minister's meeting with Pope John Paul II, leader of the world's one billion Roman Catholics.

Dr Mahathir's visit to the Christian heartland, was the first by a Malaysian head of government. Malaysia has about 600,000 Catholics.

Dompok, a Roman Catholic, was one of members of the Malaysian delegation that accompanied Dr Mahathir. The others included Energy, Communications and Multimedia Minister Datuk Amar Leo Moggie (also a Roman Catholic), Chairman of the National Fatwa Council Datuk Dr Ismail Ibrahim and independent religious preacher Uthman Muhamadi.

Dompok said the Vatican was also concerned with the world events like what was happening in West Asia.

They would like to see a third party intervention to stop the Israeli-Palestinian fighting and end the hostilities in the Palestine, he said

Dompok said that during the visit, the Malaysian delegation also had a very good meeting with the Vatican officials led by the Secretary of State, Cardinal Angelo Sadano.

-- BERNAMA

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