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Mahathir-West  
MALAYSIA ALSO LOOKS WEST, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

By: Mahrus Ibrahim and Mohd Fisol Jaafar

LUXEMBOURG, June 13 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Malaysia has never overlooked Western countries when looking for a model for the country's development and progress although it has adopted the Look East Policy.

The Prime Minister said Malaysia had never stated that when it implemented the Look East Policy, "we will not look West".

"Many people say when we look East, we forget the West...no. We say this is to complement," he told Malaysian journalists here today at the end of his three-day official visit to Luxembourg.

For example, he said, Luxembourg provided a good example of how a small country which was previously poor could become rich with a per capita income of US\$27,000 compared to US\$4,000 in Malaysia.

Dr Mahathir said he should have visited Luxembourg earlier to learn several unique matters it implemented here which had made the country rich.

Luxembourg was previously dependent on the steel industry but is now a financial centre which has attracted hundreds of international financial institutions.

It has also ventured into the broadcasting sector by launching its own satellite apart from being involved in the air freight industry through local company Cargolux.

Dr Mahathir said Luxembourg had assessed its weaknesses and strengths and had developed niches which enabled it to be successful in several fields.

"What they are doing should be right, and we want to learn from them," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia could also be wealthy like Luxembourg provided Malaysians worked hard and reduced non-constructive political practices.

"We can become rich; it is only a question of whether the people want to follow or not. But when people create other problems, we cannot become rich," he said.

Citing the New Economic Policy as an example, the Prime Minister said it should have been 100 percent successful but some people did not use appropriately the opportunities given them.

He said Luxembourg could achieve success because its people were more disciplined.

Asked on his discussions with political, financial and business leaders here, Dr Mahathir said they were impressed with Malaysia's achievements and wished to participate in Malaysia's economy.

Leaders in Luxembourg's financial sector also viewed with interest Malaysia's success in developing Labuan as an international offshore financial centre.

The Prime Minister said Malaysia could also emulate Luxembourg in managing its financial and banking sector as it had become one of the leading financial centres in the world.

This afternoon, Dr Mahathir met Luxembourg Central Bank President Yves Mersch and senior officers of Deutschbank.

He also visited the International Electronics and Engineering (IEE) factory in Echternach, about 45 minutes' journey from Luxembourg city.

IEE produces sensors for car air bag and alarm systems.

Luxembourg was the last stop in Dr Mahathir's weeklong visit to Europe,

which started with a meeting with Pope John Paul II at the Vatican City on June 7 and was followed by an official visit to Switzerland.

-- BERNAMA

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