

Iran striding path to development: Mahathir

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ISFAHAN - Former Malaysian prime minister Mahathir Mohamed said on Tuesday that Iran has taken many of the steps necessary for development and has found the right path.

“From what I have seen in my visit to Iran, I can bravely announce that we can return to our glorious past in the Islamic world, and especially in Iran,” Mahathir stated during a meeting at Isfahan University. Iran has a sufficient workforce, but to optimally utilize this potential, there must be appropriate training,” he added.

He said the Islamic Republic has enough political stability and can become a fully advanced country by making use of the experiences of other countries through long-term and short-term plans.

“In Malaysia, we have five-year development plans as well as a long-term vision, which is called Vision 2020. We expect Malaysia to become a fully developed country in the year 2020, and of course, we know where we are now and where we are heading,” Mahathir explained. Being a very advanced country with an ancient civilization, Iran is so different from Malaysia, he observed. Malaysia consists of three different ethnicities, each with their own language and culture, in which 40 percent are non-Muslims, but to avoid instability in society, we have tried to satisfy the needs of both Muslims and non-Muslims with justice, he added.

At the time of Malaysia’s independence in 1957, the per capita income was \$300 and more than 70 percent of the people lived below the poverty line, but now it has boosted its exports from \$2 billion to more than \$100 billion, and 82 percent of it is goods made in Malaysia, Mahathir said.

Unlike other new independent countries, Malaysia did not nationalize all its industries but instead prepared the ground for foreign countries to invest in fields in which it had no specialization, he added.

Islamic states could form scientific superpower

Iranian Minister of Science, Research, and Technology Mohammad-Mehdi Zahedi also met with Mahathir in Isfahan. In the meeting, Zahedi said the two “emphasized the need to establish a scientific center among Islamic countries such as Malaysia, Iran, Indonesia, and Turkey. This center could grow in a short time and create a scientific superpower benefiting all Islamic countries.” It was agreed that Tehran and Kuala Lumpur would exchange technology, Zahedi told the Mehr News Agency afterwards.

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