

We need in-depth review on MAB before making any decision - PM

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ISLAMABAD, March 23 (Bernama) -- Issues involving Malaysia Airlines Bhd (MAB) need an in-depth review before any decision can be made, says Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said the issues afflicting the national carrier was due to the approach taken by the previous government which did not make sense.

“MAB reduced its staff by 6,000 people but it also flew to fewer destinations. The ratio of personnel to the routes flown was still the same.

“We need to rethink about the airline. If there are any suggestions, including a takeover by the private sector, we will need to consider them,” he told Malaysian reporters following the conclusion of a three-day working visit to Pakistan today.

On March 5, national sovereign wealth fund Khazanah Nasional Bhd reported a loss of RM7.3 billion in 2018, mainly attributed to losses incurred by MAB.

Khazanah is the sole shareholder of MAB after taking over the ailing airline in 2014. It committed RM6 billion to improve the carrier’s performance but the effort has failed.

It was previously reported that Dr Mahathir said the government was pursuing several options before making a final decision on the fate of MAB, whether to close, sell or refinance the airline.

Meanwhile, replying to a question on national car producer Proton’s joint-venture to

establish a manufacturing assembly plant in Pakistan, the prime minister said it was better for Proton to enter markets like Pakistan rather than developed countries.

“When they (Pakistan) agreed with us to the proposal to manufacture our (Proton) cars, I felt it was a good thing. If they could produce military vehicles, I don’t think other types of vehicles would be much of a problem,” he said.

On Friday, Dr Mahathir and Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan, witnessed the groundbreaking for Proton’s manufacturing assembly plant in the country.

The assembly plant will be built near Karachi, Sindh province, and it will be the Proton’s first plant in the South Asian region.

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