

Malaysia offers to help South countries

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TUNIS: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said here yesterday that Malaysia was ready to offer assistance to South countries and to co-operate with them in tapping market potential.

"Malaysia does not pretend to have expertise in every field but I believe we can exchange information on economic planning, privatisation and other development pro-

grammes," he told Malaysian journalists.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia was also prepared for more exchanges of trade delegations and students among countries in the South.

He said he was satisfied with his African trip which took him to Namibia, Senegal where he attended the Group of 15 Summit and Tunisia.

On bilateral relations with Tunisia, Dr Mahathir said the country was

urged to buy rubber, palm oil and other products directly from Malaysia.

"There is good potential for trade as Tunisia produces fertilizers and fruits," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said Tunisia was keen to become a G-15 member but this had to be established at the next summit.

He was happy that the South Investment, Trade and Technology Data Exchange Centre (SITTEC) had been widely ac-

cepted. The centre, initiated by Malaysia, would improve communication among South countries.

He was also happy that the G-15 had accepted the Malaysian proposals which would make the group more effective in promoting closer co-operation among developing nations.

During a private lunch with Mr Yasser Arafat, Dr Mahathir and the PLO leader discussed the peace talks with Israel.

The Prime Minister said the PLO leader believed the talks were useful.

He also said that the South African People's Organisation (Swapo) of Namibia was keen to have a closer relationship with the Barisan Nasional, especially Umno.

Yesterday morning, the Prime Minister called on Tunisian President Ben Ali.

He left for Kuala Lumpur via London in the afternoon.