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MAHATHIR HOLDS INFORMAL TALKS WITH NAM LEADERS

Mahathir-talks

From Zulkefli Salleh

(Y)

JAKARTA, Sept 3 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao met informally here today and exchanged views on the future role of the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM) in the post-Cold War period.

In their brief discussions, both leaders concurred that NAM should be utilised effectively to enhance South-South co-operation, Foreign Ministry Deputy Secretary-general Datuk Abdul Halim Ali told reporters.

The two leaders are among some 60 heads of state and government attending the on-going 10th summit of the movement at the Jakarta Hilton Convention Centre.

Abdul Halim said the two leaders also touched on bilateral issues and the Indian Prime Minister took the opportunity to extend an invitation to Dr Mahathir to visit India.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir held talks with Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong and also exchanged views on the progress of NAM and how to make it more effective. -- more

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Mahathir-talks 2 (last) Jakarta

Abdul Halim said during the 30-minute talks which also covered bilateral issues, Goh noted that there was no major issue standing in the way of good relations between the two countries and that any outstanding issue would be looked into in a spirit of friendship.

Dr Mahathir also held meetings with President of the Maldives Muhammad Gayoom and Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani.

Abdul Halim said Gayoom commended Dr Mahathir for speaking up for Third World countries in his speech during the general debate on Tuesday.

Gayoom also expressed the hope that Malaysia Airlines (MAS) would start air services to the Maldives as soon as possible to help boost its tourism industry, he added.

Abdul Halim said Rafsanjani was keen to learn from Malaysia's experience in industrial development and attracting foreign investments.

Dr Mahathir is scheduled to meet President Suharto and Cambodian Supreme National Council head Prince Norodom Sihanouk this evening. -- Bernama