

Mahathir: Aim of fostering closer ties achieved

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PETALING JAYA: Malaysia has achieved its aim of fostering closer economic ties and co-operation with Bangladesh and Pakistan during the visit of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The official visits to the two countries had been successful in promoting closer ties at government to government level as well as economic co-operation at private sector level, said Dr Mahathir.

"I find them so friendly towards us.

"This is a good sign for bilateral relations between us and Bangladesh and Pakistan," he said on his return after a six-day visit to the two countries which started on Feb 12.

He was accompanied by Datuk Seri Datin Paduka Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali and Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

The visits, Dr Mahathir said, could also enhanced co-operation between Asean and the Economic Co-operation Organisation (ECO) and the South Asian Association of Regional Co-operation.

The Prime Minister said Malaysia might propose to Asean to invite the secretariats of these organisations to its ministerial and heads of government conferences.

Although still in its infant stage the ECO has potential for Malaysia as a trade link with the countries of Central Asia through Pakistan, he said.

Present at the airport to receive the Prime Minister were Information Minister Datuk Mohamed Rahmat, Law Minister Datuk Syed Hamid Albar, and Science, Technology and Environment Minister Datuk Law Hieng Ding.