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Mahatahir-party

DR M HOLD TALKS WITH VIETNAMESE COMMUNIST PARTY CHIEF

By: Rachman Nordin

HANOI, March 7 (Bernama) -- Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad called on Vietnam Communist Party (CPV) Secretary-General Do Muoi today as part of the first day itinerary of his working visit here.

"Both leaders had a very intimate and candid exchange of experience in developing each other's country," Foreign Ministry Deputy Secretary-General (1) Datuk Halim Ali told reporters after the 80-minute meeting at the CPV headquarters.

Muoi had officially visited Malaysia in 1994.

Dr Mahathir earlier called on President Le Duc Anh at the Presidential Palace where the Malaysian premier stayed during his official visit in 1992.

In their meeting, Dr Mahathir remarked of the tremendous change that Vietnam had undergone since his last visit four years ago.

Vietnam, he told the president, was on the right track towards greater advancement.

Anh, speaking through an interpreter, said his country's remarkable progress should however be seen in the context of a less developed country with a low starting point.

Meanwhile, observers said the cordiality of the Mahathir-Muoi talks testified to the expressed desires of both countries to enhance cooperation between them at ruling party level.

Earlier speaking to Malaysian journalists, Dr Mahathir said there existed cooperation between Malaysia and the Communist Party of China and there was no reason why similiar cooperation cannot be established with the CPV.

Dr Mahathir said ideology was not a hindrance to cooperation between Malaysia and Vietnam.

"It is not that we want to adopt their ideology but we just want to cooperate," he said.

Tomorrow, Dr Mahathir is scheduled to open Maybank's branch in the capital and officiate at the groundbreaking of the Noi Bai export processing zone (EPZ), one of Vietnam's six EPZs.

It is the second EPZ in Vietnam to be developed by a Malaysian company -- Kinta Kellas. The other is in Danang in central Vietnam which is being jointly developed by the Malaysia South-South Corporation consortium.

In the afternoon, Dr Mahathir is scheduled to officiate at a capping off ceremony for Faber's Hanoi Sheraton Hotel and witness the signing of three memoranda of understanding between the Vinabumi company and Vietnam Television Corporation for the installation of satellite transmitters and transponders among other things.-- BERNAMA

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