

19 AUG 1996

LEAD Anwar-India

MALAYSIA TO STUDY INDIA'S REQUEST TO SET UP BANK BRANCH

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 19 (Bernama) -- India has asked Malaysia to consider allowing an Indian-owned bank to operate here.

It has also asked Malaysia to look into the problems of bona fide Indian businessmen and tourists entering Malaysia.

These requests were among matters brought up by visiting Indian Foreign Minister Inder Kumar Gujral when he met Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim today.

Foreign Ministry Undersecretary for East and South Asia Tunku Datuk Nazihah Tunku Mohamed Rus said the name of the Indian bank was not mentioned but it would certainly be a government-sponsored bank.

"We will study India's request," she told reporters after the meeting at Anwar's office at the Prime Minister's Department.

Gujral, who arrived yesterday for a three-day visit, had earlier met his Malaysian counterpart Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Information Minister Datuk Mohamed Rahmat and Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu.

On the issue of visa for Indian businessmen and tourists, Tunku Nazihah said the rules and regulations were actually in place but the problem could be in implementation. This would be looked into, she added.

On the question of Indian workers, she said the subject was not discussed but there could be a possibility of getting Indian professionals in developing research and technology required by Malaysia.

"The thrust of the meeting was to explore and find ways of expanding the economic and trade relations between the two countries...we will encourage our private sector to be involved in projects in India," she said.

The Indian minister extended an invitation to Anwar to visit India which the Deputy Prime Minister has accepted, she said.

Gujral also referred to the "Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding" awarded by the Indian government to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Tunku Nazihah said she believed Dr Mahathir would visit New Delhi this year to receive the award which is normally presented on Nov 14.

In June this year, the seven-member jury headed by Indian Vice-President K.R. Narayanan had said Dr Mahathir was chosen for the award for his outstanding contribution in promoting close cooperation among developing countries.

The jury made the decision after careful consideration of the numerous nominations received from all over the world.

Named after India's first Prime Minister, the award carries a trophy, 1.5 million rupees (about RM107,000) in cash and a citation.

The award is administered by the Indian Council of Cultural Relations of the Ministry of External Affairs. -- BERNAMA

AZZ CTL