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Murdoch meets Dr M, Anwar during stopover

PETALING JAYA, Sun. - Media baron Rupert Murdoch who flew in for a short visit today held talks with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his deputy Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The chairman of News Corp - a global film, publishing and television group - saying he "was just passing through" also visited the Astro station in Sungei Besi. Astro has a collaboration with Murdoch's Hong Kong-based Star channel.

Met at the Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport in Subang before his departure to China, Murdoch said he did not discuss anything about his business interest or the region's economic problems with Dr Mahathir and Anwar.

"I was just passing through. We talked on world affairs," he said.

Asked whether his visit could be a prelude to him acquiring stakes in local companies to expand his media empire, he reiterated that this was not the case.

Present at the airport to see him off was Tan Sri T. Ananda Krishnan, head of Measat Broadcasting Sdn Bhd which runs Astro. He said Murdoch was very helpful and supportive of Malaysia.

"He (Murdoch) says Malaysia is a wonderful place to do business and invest."

He added that Murdoch also expressed his confidence in the country's economy, adding that it would recover from the existing downturn. However, Ananda said Murdoch did not indicate if he was interested to invest here.

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