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Call to invest in Tamil Nadu projects

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OPPORTUNITIES are available for Malaysian companies to participate in infrastructure and power projects in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu.

Minister of International Trade and Industry Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz said Malaysian companies are also urged to capitalise on Tamil Nadu's competitive advantage to sell their products to the world market.

More Malaysian investments in Tamil Nadu is expected as the state has particular advantages to offer in the area of manufacturing, for example, she noted.

She told this to reporters at the ministry yesterday after receiving a delegation led by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Kalaaignar M. Karunanidhi.

Malaysian companies are also invited to set up labour-intensive industries such as the garment industry in the southern Indian state as well as to source for information technology-based workers from Tamil Nadu.

Rafidah noted that Malaysia's total cumulative investment in India stood at RM1.715 billion in areas such as software, aquaculture, electronics and electrical, road construction and power generation.

Currently, Malaysia's IGM Corp Bhd is involved in the construction of the Chennai Expressway costing RM60 million.

Several Malaysian independent power producers have also bid and won power projects in Tamil Nadu, including a 1,000MW project in Cuddalore and a 600MW project in North Chennai.

Karunanidhi added that Tamil Nadu's rapid progressing makes the power industry an important one.

In terms of trade performance, Rafidah said between January and November 1998, total trade between Malaysia and India stood at RM8.006 billion with exports at RM6.313 billion compared with imports at RM1.693 billion.

This, she noted, was a significant increase from 1997 when total trade stood at RM5.441 billion.

"Main export items in 1997 include palm oil, crude petroleum, aeroplanes and other aircraft, wood and palm fatty acid," she said.

She added that main import items include meat of bovine animals, animal feed, parts and accessories for automatic data processing machines, textile yarn, vegetables and electrical machinery and apparatus.

Karunanidhi arrived in Kuala Lumpur yesterday on a three-day visit. He is expected to call on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and will hold talks with Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu.

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