

09 JAN 1999

MAHATHIR-TALKS

MAHATHIR HOLDS TALK WITH TAMIL NADU CHIEF MINISTER

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 9 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi held a brief discussion today that centered on enhancing ties with Malaysia and the Indian state.

Amidst the current regional financial and economic slowdown, they have noted the success in relations between Tamil Nadu and Malaysia, a Wisma Putra official, Datuk Syed Norulzaman, to reporters after the meeting at the Prime Minister's Department here.

"Both the prime minister and chief minister were happy with the mutual cooperation between Tamil Nadu and Malaysia, particularly in the economic area. There are a lot of activities going on now," he said.

Karunanidhi, accompanied by his wife Rajathi Ammal and minister of health and energy Arcot N. Veerasamy, arrived here on Thursday for a three-day visit to Malaysia.

Syed Norulzaman said during the 20-minute meeting, Dr Mahathir has expressed Malaysia's hope of seeing greater involvement and cooperation of the country's companies in the economic activity in Tamil Nadu, especially in the labour intensive area.

To this end, he said, Karunanidhi encouraged Malaysian companies to explore opportunities in port development and transportation in terms of road and highway construction.

"Karunanidhi also wanted greater Malaysian involvement in the palm oil sector," added Syed Norulzaman.

He said Dr Mahathir has also been invited to participate in an information technology conference to be held in Chennai next month.

As a whole, Malaysia's trade with India rose to RM8.006 billion at the end of November 1998 from RM5.441 billion in 1997, accounting for 1.2 percent of Malaysia's global trade.

Accumulatively, Malaysia has invested RM1.715 billion in the infrastructure and manufacturing sectors in India. -- BERNAMA

AA MFJ