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Prime Minister's positive talk with Blair

Ahmad A. Talib; Cheah Chor Sooi in London

BILATERAL matters and regional developments were among the items on the agenda during talks between visiting Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his British counterpart Tony Blair at No 10, Downing Street yesterday.

Emerging from the closed-door meeting with Blair, Dr Mahathir only managed to say a few words to journalists before his next appointment.

Looking rather pleased after the talks, and responding to Press queries, Dr Mahathir said: "Well, we discussed matters of mutual interest. We exchanged views on developments in Asean. There were some discussions on Myanmar, Indonesia and of course Malaysia-UK relations.

"We also discussed economic developments between our two countries," said Dr Mahathir, whose first meeting with Blair was in 1997.

"I invited Blair to visit Malaysia. A visit like that would enable us to understand each other better. We also discussed investments in each other's country," Dr Mahathir said, describing the talks as "good and positive."

Continuing dialogue between Dr Mahathir and British leaders should go a long way towards consolidating bilateral relations. The Prime Minister's introduction of a "Buy British Last" policy in 1981 forced Britain to take a more positive look at trade matters with its former colony.

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