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Push for wider use of MSC

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PUTRAJAYA, Fri. - Malaysia's push for a more comprehensive usage of the Multimedia Super Corridor moved ahead with Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad meeting members and representatives of the MSC International Advisory Panel today.

The one-on-one meetings, which began at 3pm, were held at the Prime Minister's office and involved two members and three representatives of the panel.

The panel members were NEC Corporation chairman emeritus Datuk Tadahiro Sekimoto and Infosys Technologies Limited chairman and chief executive officer Narayana N.R. Murthy.

The three representatives that met Dr Mahathir were Oracle Corporation (Asia Pacific) executive vice-president Prof Derek Williams, SAP Asia Pacific president and chief executive officer Les Hayman and Prof Dr Richard Nicol, head of research of British Telecommunications.

Each met Dr Mahathir for about 30 minutes. Multimedia Development Corporation (MDC) executive chairman Tan Sri Othman Yeop Abdullah was also present at all meetings.

Meanwhile, Bernama reports that Hayman, after his meeting, said the discussion with Dr Mahathir was based on the development of the MSC and the future focus of the project.

"We particularly spoke about e-learning and how it can be applied in the local education system... we also spoke about the need for skilled workforce and I don't think this will be a problem here because Malaysia is producing workers needed for the MSC through its universities," he said.

Nicol said he explained the set-up at BT Asean, an MSC status company in the Super Corridor.

"I explained to him our operations here and how we hope to work closely with local universities as well as with companies," he added.

Nicol said he also told Dr Mahathir about the BT Asean intention to set up a few companies in the MSC with assistance from local venture capitalists.

Tadahiro said the talks with the Prime Minister covered a wide range of topics with emphasis on the economic health of Malaysia and Japan.

"We talked of the impact of the US economic slowdown in the region and although there is some effect... as far as Malaysia is concerned the damage is minimal and we are positive that the MSC will not suffer due to the downturn."

He said the NEC was confident that the MSC would be a success story and he congratulated Dr Mahathir for his vision in creating the corridor.

Narayana said he thanked Dr Mahathir for inviting his participation in the MSC effort and suggested ways of improving it.

"With 546 companies including 46 multinationals in the MSC... we know it will be a success," he said.

He said Malaysia should not view the US economic slowdown as an obstacle to achieving success, but use it as an opportunity to become stronger.

In rounding up the meeting, Othman said the views of the panel members were very inspiring as all of them had sincerely noted that the MSC was moving in the right direction at a very high speed.

"They also appreciated the Government's efforts to create awareness among the people about the MSC as skilled workforce is needed to make it a

success."

"There were also some ideas thrown in like the setting up of a leadership institute to train young Malaysians on negotiating skills and on good business practices."

The one-on-one meetings will continue at the same venue tomorrow at 9am with several more members and representatives scheduled to meet Dr Mahathir.