

01 OCT 2002

India-Flights

ANDHRA PRADESH HOPES FOR DAILY KL-HYDERABAD FLIGHTS

From Arul Rajoo

HYDERABAD, Oct 1 (Bernama) -- The Andhra Pradesh government wants daily flights between Kuala Lumpur and Hyderabad as it will lead to more investment, business and tourism opportunities between the two regions.

Its chief minister, Chandrababu Naidu, said today that the current two flights a week were not sufficient, especially with the increasing importance of Hyderabad as an international information technology (IT) city.

"It takes about three hours to go to Malaysia and two hours to New Delhi. Thanks to IT, the world has become small," he told Perak Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Tajol Rosli Ghazali who called on him at his office, here.

Tajol Rosli is leading a trade mission, which includes state executive counsellor Datuk G. Rajoo, state secretary Datuk Dr Ishak Yeop and several state assemblymen, to Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

Chandrababu said the IT boom in India had created many middle-class citizens in this southern Indian state who wanted to spend their money on leisure, including visits overseas.

Tajol Rosli told his counterpart that since the collapse of the tin mining industry in the state, Perak had moved into education, tourism and IT.

"India is the second best after the United States in IT. We want to promote Perak as an IT hub and we hope to attract Indian firms," he said.

Chandrababu said there were many areas where both states could work together, among them IT, K-based economy and tourism sectors.

He also said that two Malaysian companies involved in the construction of national highway projects here had done very well.

During the meeting, Chandrababu said the progress made by Malaysia under the stewardship of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had inspired his state to become one of the leading IT centres in the country.

"We place very great importance on education and on the young generation. We are concentrating on Knowledge-based industry...we are strong in bio-technology," he added.

He said Dr Mahathir was expected to visit India's fourth largest IT solution provider, Satyam Computer Services Ltd, here on Oct 16.

The country could only be changed through the younger generation, he said, adding that the state started its IT-related sector six years ago and was doing very well now.

"But we never stop learning...we emulate South Korea. I want to make Andhra Pradesh a knowledge state and Hyderabad a knowledge hub," he said.

-- BERNAMA

AR AHH JK