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Mahathir-IT

MAJOR INDIAN IT COMPANIES KEEN TO EXPAND OPERATION TO MALAYSIA

By: Ahmad Zukiman Zain

HYDERABAD, Oct 17 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's first-ever visit to this emerging Indian information-technology (IT) destination has produced substantive result with several Indian IT companies keen to expand their operations to Malaysia.

"Some of the IT companies here feel that Malaysia can serve as a back-up place for their operations," the prime minister said at a media conference before leaving for New Delhi.

One of the companies, Satyam Computer Services Ltd, which the prime minister visited in Secunderabad this morning, planned to make Malaysia its solution centre to cater for its global clients.

The multifaceted end-to-end IT solutions provider has a presence in 43 countries and a customer base of over 260 global clients.

Its chairman, Ramalinga Raju, told the prime minister that one of the advantages that Malaysia had was the excellent infrastructure at the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) and that "it is just a few hours' flight from Hyderabad."

Dr Mahathir assured the company of the Malaysian government's support in its move to expand its operation to Malaysia.

Another major Indian IT company, Infosys, which Dr Mahathir visited yesterday had also expressed its readiness to work closely with Malaysia.

Summing-up his visit, Dr Mahathir said that coming to Hyderabad, the capital of Andhra Pradesh, had given him first-hand knowledge of this part of India.

He said there was tremendous potential for cooperation, especially in the IT sector, as Andhra Pradesh was also promoting Hyderabad as an IT hub.

It has set up the Hyderabad Information Technology Engineering Consultancy (Hitec) City which the prime minister visited yesterday, soon after his arrival from Kuala Lumpur.

"We have established relations with the state government of Andhra Pradesh and we think that this will lead to greater cooperation," he said, adding that there were several areas being looked into.

"I will not be very specific but we are looking into several things where, somehow or other, there have been hitches, among which, of course, is the possibility of assembling our cars or producing our cars in Andhra Pradesh," he said.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu had proposed during a visit to Malaysia in 1997 that Proton manufacture its cars in the state to boost exports in the luxury car segment.

Asked if there were problems for Malaysian companies to invest in this state, Dr Mahathir said a number of Malaysian companies are operating here mainly in construction and infrastructure like ports.

Asked if Malaysia intended to open a consulate here, he said there was no such plan at the moment.

"However, if we find enough interaction and enough need for it, we will look into the possibility of having some representation," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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