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Mahathir-Visit

M'SIA AND INDIA SET TO BOLSTER COOPERATION IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

By: Ahmad Zukiman Zain

HYDERABAD, Oct 16 (Bernama) -- Malaysia and India are set to enhance cooperation in the information technology (IT) sector following the landmark visit by Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to the country's emerging IT hub here today.

The Prime Minister visited the Hyderabad Information Technology Engineering Consultancy (Hi-Tec City) in Madhapur, near here to get a firsthand look at its infrastructure, which has attracted multinationals to set up their branches there.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, who is instrumental in making this state capital an IT hub, briefed Dr Mahathir on the Hi-Tec city which was launched in 1997.

The Prime Minister arrived this afternoon for a two-day stay at the start of his three-nation visit, which includes Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

This is his first visit to Hyderabad, a bustling 400 year-old metropolis of about 4.2 million people.

After Hi-Tec, Dr Mahathir visited the nearby International Institute of Information Technology (IIIT), referred here as the "Triple IT".

Started in 1998, the institute aims to develop quality manpower at both undergraduate and post-graduate levels as well as to conduct research and develop technologies.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar, Works Minister Datuk Seri S.Samy Vellu and Energy, Communications and Multimedia Minister Datuk Leo Moggie accompanied the Prime Minister.

Dr Mahathir then visited Infosys Technologies, one of the top five software companies in the world with export notching US\$7.6 billion (RM28.89 billion).

The Nasdaq-listed Infosys is the first Indian company to be listed on an American stock exchange in 1999.

Its chairman, N.R.Narayana Murthy told Dr Mahathir that the company, which has development centres in eight cities in India and outside the country, was keen to enhance cooperation with Malaysia.

Murthy is a member of the International Advisory Panel (IAP) of Malaysia's Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC).

A happy Naidu described Dr Mahathir's visit as good as he had been able to see the Hi-Tec City, "Triple IT" and Infosys.

Tomorrow, the Prime Minister will visit Satyam, another major player in India's IT industry, before leaving for New Delhi.

"We are very happy to receive him. His visit will give many advantages. It is a win-win situation for Malaysia and India especially for Andhra Pradesh," Naidu told Bernama.

"Malaysia is very strong in information technology hardware and we are very strong in software. So if both hardware and software are join together, it will do wonders and create a win-win situation," he said.

He said he had been inspired by Malaysia and Dr Mahathir had done very well in preparing the Vision 2020.

"On that basis, I also prepared Vision 2020. Now our country is preparing Vision 2020. We want to become a developed nation in 20 years' time," said Naidu who tonight hoster a dinner for Dr Mahathir and his delegation.

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