

# Lebanon invites Malaysian investors

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**BEIRUT:** Lebanon has invited Malaysian businessmen and investors to participate in the country's reconstruction and other ventures, including gas exploration, telecommunications and privatisation schemes.

Lebanese Prime Minister Rafic Hariri said the Malaysian construction sector had one of the most competitive pricing and could thus vie for projects in his country.

"We have a system based on open tender and open competition but I'm sure that Malaysian companies will be treated as friends.

"So we encourage Malaysian companies to participate in the development of Lebanon," he said at a joint press conference with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad,

after their meeting here on Monday.

Hariri also urged Dr Mahathir to encourage Malaysian businessmen to take part in gas exploration in Lebanon, the telecommunications sector as well as to vie for its electricity and water privatisation schemes.

During their discussions, the two leaders exchanged views on improving relations between countries, especially in trade and economy.

"There has always been good understanding between us," Dr Mahathir said, adding that he considered Hariri a very good friend.

He expressed the hope that his two-day visit with Malaysian businessmen would help build greater economic interaction between Lebanon and Malaysia, "which will

be mutually beneficial."

He said that after Hariri visited Malaysia a few years ago and showed him pictures of the reconstruction work in Lebanon, he was very keen to come to Lebanon and see for himself the changes that had taken place since his last visit five years ago.

"I'm quite amazed," he said. "Flying in just now, I could see the tremendous construction that had been completed, with high-rise buildings all over the city."

Dr Mahathir believed that Lebanon would continue to sustain its stability.

"Of course, when the war was fought here, we never thought it would ever recover," he said, adding that five years ago, the country was beginning to rebuild itself.