

Lebanon extends invitation to Malaysia's business community

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PETALING JAYA: Despite its long history of conflicts, Lebanon has vast money-making opportunities, and is inviting Malaysian businessmen to take advantage of what it has to offer.

Malaysia is among the first countries invited to invest in the reconstruction of the country, following years of war, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

However, he said such participation would be through the tender process and not through direct negotiations.

Mahathir said he is impressed with

the rebuilding process following the 16 years of war, which has more or less destroyed the country's capital Beirut.

Lebanon began its reconstruction process in 1991, following the signing of the Ta'if Accord.

"I can't imagine that it was totally destroyed ... now they have many high-rise buildings," he said.

During the visit, Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri had invited the Malaysian business community to take part in gas exploration off Lebanon, as well as in the country's mobile phone

and telecommunications sectors.

Mahathir also said Lebanon is seeking the help of Malaysians to build shopping complexes.

On his meeting with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, Mahathir said both leaders exchanged views on what was happening in the Middle East.

Mahathir also extended an invitation to the Egyptian leader to attend the Non-Alligned Movement in Kuala Lumpur next month. Hosni has not decided if he will attend the meeting.