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BJP-Umno

INDIA'S BJP TO INVITE UMNO DELEGATION TO VISIT INDIA

By: R.Ravichandran

KUALA LUMPUR, June 18 (Bernama) -- India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will invite an Umno delegation to visit the country to promote better understanding between the parties and leaders.

BJP Foreign Affairs Committee Convener Surendra K.Arora told Bernama here today that such visits would provide opportunities to discuss various issues of mutual interest in a detailed way.

He said BJP was also interested in establishing contacts with other political parties in Malaysia's ruling Barisan Nasional but at the moment the focus would be Umno as it was the dominant party, like BJP which is leading a 24-party coalition.

"What we would like to have is more substantive discussions. We would like to spend a few days with them (Umno delegation in India) discussing all issues of interest to both parties and the two countries," he said.

Arora who met BN Secretary General Datuk Mohamed Rahmat and PPP President Datuk M.Kayveas here today would be attending the opening of the Umno General Assembly by Prime Minister and Umno President Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad tomorrow.

BJP's history dates back to 1951 but the party got its name (BJP) in 1980.

Arora said that the BJP also had an exchange programmes with other political parties in the world like the Communist Party of China.

"We believe this (exchange of visits between BJP and Umno) will help in promoting better relations between our countries and better understanding between our peoples. Eventually that will have a (positive) impact on our two countries," he said.

Arora, a veteran diplomat in the Indian foreign service, also said BJP and Umno had certain similarities such as the ruling coalition which was formed before elections, which was very good in ensuring a stable government.

"Such coalitions are more lasting than the coalitions formed after elections," he said citing BJP's own experience where the coalition it formed in 1998 after the election, collapsed within a year and in 1999 it decided to form a coalition with other parties -- but this time before the general election.

Arora said they also had come up with a common agenda for national development -- one single manifesto, similar to what Umno and its partners in the BN had done all these years during election times.

Describing New Delhi-Putrajaya relations as "very nice and very good" he said that India certainly valued this relationship.

"We hope to develop good relations and understanding for mutually beneficial relations in the economic and political fields and many other areas," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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