

27 JUL 2003

Mahathir-Model

MAHATHIR: M'SIAN-THAI COOPERATION IS A MODEL FOR THE WORLD

LANGKAWI, July 27 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that Malaysia and Thailand offer the best model to the world of how two countries sharing a common border should live, coexist and cooperate with one another.

Speaking at a dinner in honour of Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra here, the Prime Minister said the two countries were enjoying close cooperation in various fields in the spirit of collaboration.

The Thai premier, who is on a two-day working visit to Langkawi, held fruitful bilateral talks with Dr Mahathir earlier in the afternoon. The two leaders also delivered keynote addresses at the Malaysia-Thailand Technology Business Partnership Dialogue in the morning.

Dr Mahathir described the partnership dialogue as yet another chapter in the relationship between the two countries, a move initiated to provide a new forum for cooperation in technology to enhance both countries' economic growth.

"This is yet another fine example of the spirit of collaboration that will continue to contribute to the expansion and consolidation of cooperation between Malaysia and Thailand," he said.

He said joint efforts by the two countries in the energy and commodity sectors, for example, had borne fruit.

"I am also pleased that we are continuously looking at new ways to expand such cooperation in other activities as well, such as in transport, health, education and culture, all of which we had discussed in Haadyai," he said. The cabinets of the two countries held an informal meeting there last year.

Dr Mahathir said the two countries were also particularly pleased with the various bilateral cooperation efforts taking place between their agencies at common border intended to enhance the socio-economic wellbeing of the people in the border areas of both countries.

"This afternoon we had a frank and meaningful discussion on various issues affecting our two countries. We noted with satisfaction the excellent state of our relations as well as the satisfactory progress in our ongoing trade, investment and tourism," he said.

Dr Mahathir said he was encouraged by Thaksin's support for resolving the issues they had identified.

"In this regard, I cannot agree with you more when you said in Bangkok last year that Malaysia and Thailand offer the best model to the world of how two countries sharing a common border should live, coexist and cooperate with one another," he said.

Dr Mahathir also spoke of the need to pool resources among countries in the region so that they would be better placed to nip any terrorist activity in the bud because no one country could combat this evil alone.

He hoped the Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism established by Malaysia would receive continued support from Thailand and other neighbours as well as the international community and the United Nations.

He also noted that cooperation between both countries had helped to overcome the recent outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) that caused havoc to the region's economy, especially in the tourism and transport sectors.

He thanked Thaksin for Thailand's positive contribution in tackling

SARS by successfully hosting the Asean and Asean plus China Leaders Meeting, as well as the APEC Health Ministers Meeting on SARS in Bangkok recently.

-- BERNAMA

ZS MAN YBY