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New business partnerships with Thais

LANGKAWI, Sat. - The two-day Malaysia-Thailand Technology and Business Partnership Dialogue here beginning tomorrow will create new business partnerships and strategies for economic co-operation between the two countries.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his Thai counterpart Thaksin Shinawatra will both deliver keynote addresses tomorrow.

A total of 326 participants ranging from ministers to senior government officials and top businessmen from both countries will be present.

The dialogue is jointly organised by the Malaysian Industry-Government Group for High Technology (MIGHT) and the National Science and Technology Development Agency Thailand.

The event is held in collaboration between the Ministry of International Trade and Industry and the Ministry of Science and Technology Thailand.

"With the global economy now not being at its best, we should be looking for new ways of doing things to enhance economic growth in our two countries," MIGHT joint chairman (Government) Tan Sri Dr Ahmad Zaharudin Idrus said.

"We want to promote through this dialogue the philosophy of 'prospering thy neighbour'; we want to show that it can work between Malaysia and Thailand," he added.

Thailand's National Science and Technology Development Agency vice-president Dr Chatri Sripaipan said the presence of both Prime Ministers had attracted top-notch participants.

MIGHT president/chief executive Datuk Dr Ahmad Tasir Lope Pihie said although both countries competed for a slice of the regional market, there were many areas where co-operation could be developed.

"The industries in both countries can co-operate while the individual firms compete. For example, there are Malaysian companies involved in the Thai automotive business, and we feel that the opposite is also happening."

Besides dialogue sessions to discuss current co-operation and future projects, the event would also feature parallel workshops in various areas.

They include agro-biotechnology and agriculture; information and communication technology; the automotive, electronic and electrical industries; and eco-tourism and sustainable development.

A business-matching session and exhibition showcasing the leading industrial players from both countries will also be held.

Among the speakers, moderators and interveners scheduled to participate in the dialogue are Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia Tan Sri Dr Noordin Sopiee; Perusahaan Otomobil Nasional Bhd chief executive Tan Sri Tengku Mahaleel Tengku Ariff and Mimos Bhd president Datuk Tengku Dr Mohd Azzman Shariffadeen Tengku Ibrahim.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi will close the dialogue on Monday following the summation and tabling of resolutions.