

Dr M meets 'old friend' in private visit to India
Malaysiakini.com
Disember 24, 2010

Former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad called on India, rising Asian economic powerhouse, to engage South-East Asian economies more and share its vast expertise with developing nations.

"India has not really made full attempt to interact with countries of Southeast Asia. There is a great deal of potential. India has made great progress in IT (information technology), for example, and this is much desired by the countries in South-East Asia.

"This is something that can be exported, not just the products but the knowledge itself. There are lots of skilled people here who may find their services appreciated in South-East Asia," he told Bernama in Delhi.

While biting December winter enveloped Delhi, Mahathir and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh warmed up age-old ties over lunch at the latter's residence, flanked by senior Indian ministers yesterday.

After a hiatus of over 15 years, Mahathir, along with his wife Siti Hasmah, is in India on a private visit.

'India doing quite a good job'

Mahathir, a well-respected Asian statesman in the region, especially among Indian intellectuals, lauded the terrific economic progress made by India - transformed from a socialist market economy to a more open system.

"India is doing quite a good job. India is very open and more liberal now. It is not that there is any obstruction but South-East Asia is not promoting itself in India. We are looking at other places," he added.

At the lunch table, Manmohan, an old friend of Mahathir, had said he would like more Malaysian companies to invest in the Indian economy, growing at about 8.9 percent.

"He (Manmohan) wants to see more Malaysian investments coming into India, more investors and visitors. Our government should put in more effort to develop not only tourism but also business between the two countries. I think there is great scope," said Mahathir.

- Bernama