

Saifuddin: Malaysia-India ties civilisation-based 'friendship'

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Malaysia regards the 65 years of diplomatic ties with India as not merely anchored on bilateral relations but extended to the level of friendship based on civilisation, said Foreign Minister Saifuddin Abdullah.

The minister said there has been significant progress in the two countries' bilateral relations and the civilisational relationship enjoyed by both countries made it even more special.

"Our relations predate the 65 years of official bilateral relations. The relations between India and Malaysia and the people of both countries are not just a bilateral relation, but a civilisational one," he said.

The minister said this in his speech at the special commemorative event "India-Malaysia@65' organised by the Consortium of Indian Industries in Malaysia (CIIM) and Malaysia India Business Council (MIBC) to celebrate 65 years of the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Malaysia last night.

Also present at the event were the Indian High Commissioner to Malaysia, BN Reddy and founder-chairperson of CIIM, Umang Sharma.

The minister said the relationship between India and Malaysia has grown from Strategic Partnership in 2010 to Enhanced Strategic Partnership in 2015, eyeing new cooperation in cultural diplomacy, digital economy and agro commodity.

Expanding ties

"During my visit to New Delhi in June, I met my (counterpart) India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar at the sidelines of the special ASEAN-India Foreign Ministers' meeting and discussed possible new cooperation in various fields including cultural diplomacy as well as trade and investment," he added.

He said over 150 Indian companies have invested US\$3 billion (RM13.4 billion) in Malaysia in various sectors namely biotechnology, financial services, manufacturing and the textile industry.

Saifuddin said considering the strategic location and conducive business environment, Indian companies are encouraged to expand their operations, taking advantage of Malaysia being the hub for ASEAN.

Meanwhile, Reddy in his speech, said the 65 years of vibrant ties between India and Malaysia takes pride in the Indian diaspora in Malaysia, the second largest in the world, calling it the living bond of friendship between India and Malaysia.

On the education sector, the diplomat said considering the success of the Melaka-Manipal Medical College in Malaysia in churning out close to 15,000 medical doctors in Malaysia to date, India will have its first offshore campus of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) in Malaysia.

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