



EXCHANGING IDEAS: Abdullah having a discussion with British corporate leaders in London on Thursday.

Big vote of confidence

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LONDON: British corporate leaders have expressed confidence in Malaysia's business climate despite the military coup in Thailand, said Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

The Prime Minister said they were keen to expand their investments in new sectors such as in the nutraceutical, pharmaceutical, aquaculture and bio-technological industries.

He said the British investors were fully aware of Malaysia's political stability in view of their strong economic ties with the country over the years.

"It's just that they wanted to hear my views as leader of a neighbouring country (to Thailand)," he told Malaysian journalists after a working lunch

with British captains of industries here on Thursday.

Among those present were HSBC CEO Michael Geoghehan, Standard Chartered plc chairman Bryan Sanderson, Matheson & Co Ltd chairman Henry Keswick, BAE Systems plc vice-chairman Sir Charles Masefield, Metdist Ltd chairman Lord Bagri, Merrill Lynch vice-president Imran Khan and Dresdner Kleinwort vice-chairman Simon Parker.

Abdullah, who was on a two-day working visit to Britain after attending the 61st UN General Assembly in New York, said they expressed concern over the latest political development in Thailand and its impact on the Asean region, particularly Malaysia.

"I told them we're watching the situation very closely since it's our northern neighbour."

On whether the appointment of a Muslim-Thai general would help to stabilise the southern provinces, Abdullah said Malaysia was still studying the latest developments.

The Prime Minister said he also briefed them on the Ninth Malaysia Plan and the country's aspirations for greater economic development.

"They showed keen interest in Malaysia's development policies in view of their strong ties with our business community," he said.

Abdullah said he also briefed them on the Southern Johor Economic Region, the Islamic banking and financial system, and Malaysia's close relationship with Singapore.

The Prime Minister also met Malaysian students at the Malaysian High Commission yesterday.

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