

Thailand to consider PM's advice on conflict

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PUTRAJAYA: Thailand will consider Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's advice on how to address the conflict in its southern provinces.

Thai Foreign Minister Nitya Pibulsonggram said the prime minister's valuable insight into ways of strengthening the scope of co-operation with Thailand will also prove useful.

"I am very grateful for the time he was able to spend with me.

"We had a fruitful meeting and he gave a lot of wonderful advice on the scope of co-operation to strengthen our references with regard to southern Thailand where there is dissatisfaction and difficulties faced by the (Thai) government."

He was speaking to reporters after meeting the prime minister for a 40-minute discussion at Abdullah's office here.

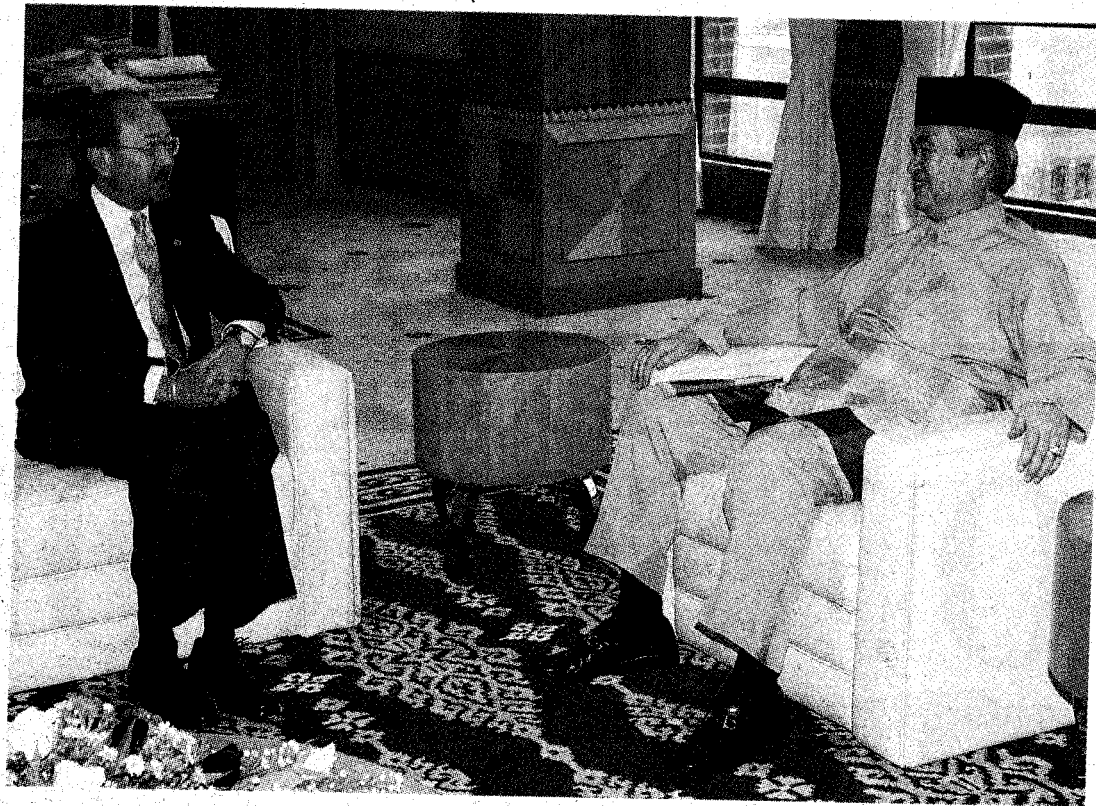
Nitya said the discussion included topics such as education and social and cultural issues.

"There is a wealth of materials that we can learn and borrow gradually from Malaysia. This country has been a wonderful neighbour to us.

"There are lots of things that we need to look into in terms of details but we will definitely carry them forward."

Asked whether his government could cope with the rising tension and insurgency in southern Thailand, Nitya said: "We can cope ... we definitely can cope.

"Some of the discussions have



Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi (right) holding discussions with Thai Foreign Minister Nitya Pibulsonggram at his office yesterday. — Bernama picture

taken place here in Kuala Lumpur for which we are delighted and grateful as the outcome will be used to address some of our problems.

"Perhaps, they can be used to strengthen some of the efforts that have already been put into place (in southern Thailand)."

Nitya said efforts to normalise the situation in the southern

provinces would be based on seeking the people's co-operation in the matter.

"For those who have been having limited opportunities, we will give them more chances (to get ahead in life)," he added.

On the Joint Commission Meeting which Thailand will be hosting next month, Nitya said a date would be fixed soon.

He described the meeting as very important "as we need that specific mandate to keep us moving ahead".

Nitya also met his counterpart, Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Syed Albar, on Thursday, to chart out a road map towards boosting co-operation between the two countries besides seeking an early end to the conflict in the south.