

# Malaysia's great gift for young Indonesians

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**JAKARTA:** Malaysia not only provides jobs for millions of Indonesians but is helping to build the future of its younger generation, several Indonesians said.

Dr J. Goenawan of the Ukrida University said the building of schools for 34,000 children of Indonesian workers, particularly in Sabah and Sarawak, was a "meaningful gift".

"I believe the Malaysian government's provision of schools to meet the children's educational needs has never happened elsewhere in the world.

"Only true friendship could make this happen as announced by Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and Indonesian President

Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono," he said.

Susilo, in a Press conference with Abdullah on Thursday, thanked Malaysia for agreeing to build schools for Indonesian children on its soil. Indonesia would send up to 1,000 teachers.

Goenawan said the 34,000 Indonesian children were a fortunate lot for they were provided better facilities than their peers in many Indonesian schools.

"Moreover, education in Malaysia is of quality and free. The curriculum is also different. They are getting something not many Indonesian children enjoy."

Malaysia, he said, was also assisting millions of other Indonesian children whose parents or

family members worked in Malaysia and remitted money home.

Sofwan Effendi, general manager of a popular radio station here, said Abdullah had made significant contributions in strengthening bilateral ties between the two countries.

"Malaysia should continue to build a long-term image in the eyes of the Indonesian public."

Member of the Indonesian Contractors' Association Victor Sitorus said co-operation in the construction sector, including building roads and highways, was encouraged by both leaders.

"There was a feeling in the past that Malaysian businessmen were here to grab opportunities. But this has changed with closer col-

laboration among developers and contractors.

"So, it is not surprising that Malaysia is one of this country's top foreign investors."

He said his association and its Malaysian counterpart had held discussions to scout for opportunities elsewhere.

Indonesian Independent Lecturers' Forum secretary-general Dr Yushman said Malaysia and Indonesia shared a common stand on issues such as the Palestine situation, Iraqi conflict and the Iranian nuclear programme.

He added that the conferment of the country's highest honour, Adi Pradana, on Abdullah was testimony to plans by the leaders to enhance relations. — Bernama