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Abdullah ready to meet Thai PM

BUTTERWORTH: Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi yesterday said he was ready to meet Thailand's new Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej to discuss the conflict in south Thailand.

The prime minister said it was in both countries' interests that the conflict be resolved quickly to restore stability in the area.

Abdullah said both countries were already co-operating to restore stability in the three Muslim-majority border provinces.

"They have asked us to help out in issues affecting the Muslims in the south, especially in terms of education and the economy.

"We will continue with this co-operation and I will discuss it with

the new Thai prime minister," he said, adding that any move to restore stability in the border area would also benefit Malaysia.

It was reported that Samak had expressed his intention to meet Abdullah and discuss the southern Thailand issue.

He was reported to have said he would bring up the matter on the

Malaysia leg of the premier's customary visit to Asean member countries upon taking office.

He said the new Thai government would continue to adopt various economic, social and educational programmes undertaken by the previous military government and Malaysia to quell the unrest in the country's south.

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