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Dr M: Ensure probe doesn't affect airlines' operations

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SERI KEMBANGAN: Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad welcomes the probe into the Malaysian Airline System Bhd-AirAsia Bhd deal but hopes that it does not affect their daily operations.

Dr Mahathir also hopes that the investigation would be swift.

He was commenting on the Securities Commission and Bursa Malaysia's investigation into the MAS-AirAsia deal.

"Just make sure that the probe does not affect their daily operations," he said after presenting the closing speech at the 3rd World Chinese Economic Forum here yesterday.

The investigators should refrain from taking the account books of both companies for months that will affect the two airlines' daily operations, Dr Ma-

hathir added.

"Just make sure the accounts books are returned quickly and not kept for months until they are unable to operate," he remarked.

Dr Mahathir said the collaboration between the two airlines was bound to bring in some good, especially, for the ailing national carrier MAS.

"There is something that MAS can learn from AirAsia, which knows how to operate a profitable company running on low-cost," he said.

It was earlier reported in August that Tune Air Sdn Bhd and Khazanah Nasional Bhd, major shareholders of AirAsia and MAS respectively, had agreed to swap their shares.

From the deal, Tune Air owns 20.5 per cent equity interest in the national carrier, while Khazanah holds a 10 per cent stake in the low-cost carrier.