

Exploring new possibilities

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Dr M and Moon discuss mutually beneficial ventures

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PUTRAJAYA: The issue of the Korean peninsula, the halal industry, the Look East Policy and industrialisation dominated discussions between Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and President Moon Jae-in as both countries explore new possibilities in bilateral relations.

The Prime Minister and the visiting South Korean President spent more than two hours in deep discussion over these issues to see how best both countries could work together and find mutually beneficial ventures.

Dr Mahathir and Moon expressed hope for peace in the Korean peninsula, with the Prime Minister saying that Malaysia aspired to see good and improved ties between South Korea and its neighbour.

"We hope that the relationship between South Korea and North Korea will improve over the years.

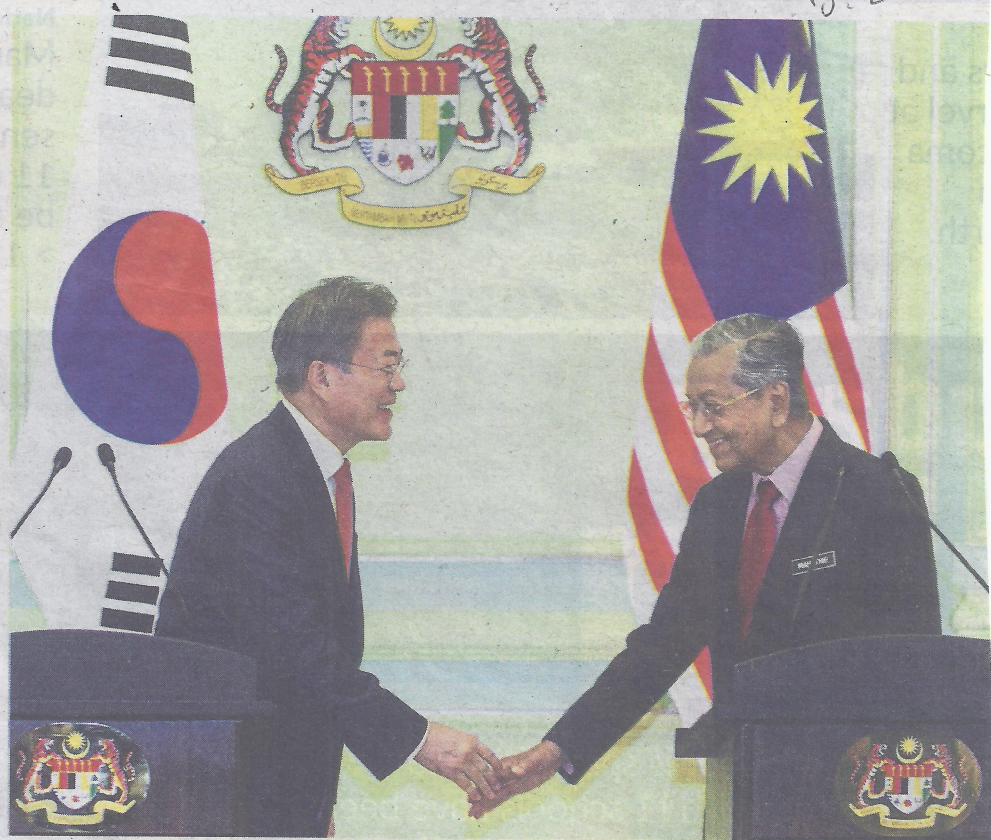
"We hope that an agreement will be reached between the United States and North Korea on disarmament and then, we expect to see peace and stability in this part of the world," said Dr Mahathir during a joint press conference with Moon at the end of their bilateral meeting at the Prime Minister's Office here yesterday.

The US and North Korea held two summits aimed at resolving the conflict over nuclear weapons and the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula.

In response to this, Moon said South Korea agreed to closely cooperate for the peace and prosperity of the Korean peninsula.

"The Prime Minister has expressed unwavering support to my government's efforts to establish peace in the peninsula and agreed to cooperate closely to encourage North Korea's participation in Asean and the international community," he said.

Dr Mahathir said discussion with South Korea also touched on halal products and the prospect of sending more students to the country to study engineering and IT.



Meeting of minds: Dr Mahathir and Moon shaking hands after their joint press conference at the Prime Minister's Office in Putrajaya.

"South Korea is interested to comply with the needs of Muslim travellers and to ensure that its products meet halal conditions.

"Also, as part of the continuation of our Look East Policy, Malaysia wishes to keep on sending students to Korea, especially to study engineering, IT and new technology so that we can follow the development of Korea," he said.

The Prime Minister said Moon had pointed out to him that South Korea only began its industrialisation process through car manufacturing.

"It started with cars and look at where they are today. We are very impressed indeed. We also started with cars but have not done as well as Korea," Dr Mahathir pointed out.

Moon said while Malaysia had initiated its Look East Policy, his country was actively promoting the New Southern Policy to elevate and develop its relations with Asean countries, including Malaysia.

"Today, as a result of bringing the Look East Policy and the New Southern Policy in a harmonious way, we have agreed to strengthen strategic cooperation to make it more people-centric and aiming for peace and prosperity," he said.

The New Southern Policy, which Moon unveiled in 2017, was aimed at reducing South Korea's reliance on the United States,

China, Japan and Russia by expanding ties with South-East Asian nations and India.

Moon said the two countries had also agreed to set up a framework to expand bilateral trade and investment and to explore cooperation in advanced industries including IT, smart manufacturing, future cars and health and medical fields.

"We agree to cooperate on intelligent transport system (and) to make inroads into the global halal market. We share our great appreciation for the smart city pilot project to be launched in Kota Kinabalu," he said.

Commending Malaysia's economic development and its leading role in fostering peace and prosperity in the South-East Asian region, Moon paid tribute to Dr Mahathir, saying that this was possible because "of the vision of an outstanding leader".

Four memoranda of understanding were inked between Malaysia and South Korea, including on industrial cooperation pursuant to the Fourth Industrial Revolution, and cooperation in the field of transport, the development of Smart City and the halal industry.

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