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MAHATHIR-ISLAM

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FROM SYED JAMIL JAAFAR

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PORT LOUIS, AUG 17 (BERNAM) -- MALAYSIA HAS AGREED TO PROVIDE 1250,000 FOR THE SETTING UP OF THE MAURITIUS ISLAMIC CENTRE.

PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD EXPRESSED MALAYSIA'S READINESS TO PROVIDE THE ASSISTANCE DURING TALKS BETWEEN DELEGATIONS FROM THE TWO COUNTRIES AT THE OFFICE OF MAURITIUS PRIME MINISTER SIR AMEROOD JUGNAUTH HERE YESTERDAY.

ACCORDING TO FOREIGN MINISTRY DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL DATUK MAJID MOHAMAD, MALAYSIA ALSO OFFERED ASSISTANCE TO PROVIDE THE DESIGN FOR THE CENTRE. HOWEVER, THE OFFER WAS DECLINED BY THE MAURITIUS GOVERNMENT WHICH WOULD MAKE ITS OWN DESIGN FOR THE BUILDING.

SEVENTEEN PER CENT OR 170,000 OF THE PEOPLE OF MAURITIUS ARE MUSLIMS.

IN PORT LOUIS ALONE, THERE ARE SEVERAL MOSQUES AND MAURITIUS IS A PARTICIPANT IN THE ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL QURANIC RECITERS AND MEMORISERS ASSEMBLY IN KUALA LUMPUR. -- MORE
1836MST 17 08 88

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DATUK MAJID TOLD MALAYSIAN JOURNALISTS COVERING DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR'S VISIT HERE THAT THIS ASSISTANCE OFFERED BY MALAYSIA WAS NOT SOMETHING NEW.

MALAYSIA HAD ALREADY PROVIDED SUCH ASSISTANCE TO MALDIVES AND SOUTH KOREA.

MALAYSIA ALSO OFFERED TO TRAIN RELIGIOUS TEACHERS AND QURANIC RECITERS FROM MAURITIUS.

APART FROM THAT, MALAYSIA AGREED TO STEP UP VOCATIONAL TRAINING ASSISTANCE TO THE PEOPLE OF MAURITIUS.

MAURITIUS HAS BEEN SENDING ITS TRAINEES TO MALAYSIA AND ITS GOVERNMENT OFFICERS ATTEND COURSES AT THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (INTAN). -- MORE
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DATUK MAJID SAID MAURITIUS ALSO SOUGHT MALAYSIA'S ASSISTANCE IN SENDING ITS BADMINTON COACHES AND THAT THE REQUEST WOULD BE CONSIDERED.

MAURITIUS, WHICH ALSO FACES THE DADAH PROBLEM, THOUGH NOT VERY SERIOUS, SHOWED INTEREST TOWARDS REHABILITATION PROGRAMMES IN MALAYSIA.

MAURITIUS ALSO HAS THE DEATH PENALTY FOR DADAH TRAFFICKERS. TWO INDIANS HAD ALREADY BEEN SENTENCED TO DEATH FOR DADAH TRAFFICKING AND THEY ARE AT PRESENT AWAITING A DECISION ON THEIR APPEAL.

THE MAURITIUS GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN HOLDING AN ANTI-DADAH CAMPAIGN SINCE LAST YEAR. NARCOTICS IN MAURITIUS ARE MAINLY HEROIN AND GANJA.
-- BERNAMA
1903MST 17 08 88