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MALAYSIA SUCCEEDS IN PUTTING ACROSS VIEWS

Mahathir-CHOGM

from Kuah Guan, oo

(P) Dr. M - overseas trips.

HARARE, Oct 22 (Bernama) -- Malaysia's most significant achievement at the just-concluded Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) here was that it managed to put across its views on human rights and democracy, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

Malaysia had made known its views in the midst of pressure from the West, he told Malaysian journalists here Monday night. The meeting ended Monday, a day ahead of schedule.

The prime minister said that if Malaysia did not speak out on these matters, it might be misconstrued as a country which did not respect human rights.

He said human rights had many interpretations and even the West could not escape the question of human rights.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said he was satisfied with the meeting because it offered Malaysia the opportunity to enhance ties with other countries, particularly through bilateral talks, and speak on various issues, including the environment.

During the week-long CHOGM, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir had met the leaders of Mauritius, Cyprus, Seychelles, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Britain for bilateral discussions. -- more

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On Monday, he met 10 leaders from Africa and the Caribbean.

He said CHOGM also provided Malaysia the chance to sound out fellow members on its intention to host the 1998 Commonwealth Games.

Other than Australia, which is also bidding for the Games, many countries were supportive of Malaysia's bid, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said.

He said Malaysia had told them that it could successfully organise the Games.

He also said that many of the resolutions adopted at the Kuala Lumpur CHOGM in 1989 had been implemented.

They included those on technology transfer, education and the Commonwealth fund. -- more

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Another major development was the decision by Britain and Canada to write off two-thirds of debts owed by small countries and allow repayment of the balance on favourable terms, he added.

On his appointment as head of the Group of 11 entrusted with helping to resolve the South African question, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said it was an extension of the High-Level Appraisal Group (HLAG) whose mandate had expired.

The Group of 11 comprises the 10 members of HLAG, which was also headed by Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir, and Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said he had asked Commonwealth Secretary-General Chief Emeka Anyaoku to visit South Africa to discuss with the relevant parties how the Commonwealth could help to settle their problems.

The various groups in South Africa, like the African National Congress (ANC), Pan African Congress and the white government of President F.W. de Klerk, have yet to reach agreement on the formation of a non-racial democratic government.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said Chief Anyaoku would report his findings to the group before it decided on follow-up action on the matter. -- Bernam

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