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Mahathir-privatisation

TUNISIA KEEN TO LEARN MALAYSIA 'S PRIVATISATION POLICIES

From Mahrus Ibrahim

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TUNIS, Nov 25<sup>92</sup> (Bernama) -- Tunisia want:: to learn about Malaysia's privatisation policies.

This was conveyed by Tunisian Prime Minister Dr Hamed Karoui to Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at their unofficial talks here soon after Dr Mahathir arrived yesterday for a two-day visit.

Malaysian Foreign Mjnister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi told Malaysian journalists last, night that. Tunisia planned to send its officers to Kuala Lumpur to study Malaysia's privatisation policies and pccedures.

He said Tunisia wanted to know how Malaysia overcame workers' protest against privatisation, a problem it was now grappling with.

Abdullah said Dr Mahathir explained to Dr Karoui that vorkers in Malaysia also protested in the beginning but that now they were asking for privatisation to be speeded up. -- more

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Mahathir-privatisation 2 Tunis

Both Dr Xaroui and Dr Mahathir also discussed developments in South-South cooperation, particularly efforts to step up economic relations .

Abdullah said Dr Mahathir pointed out that the lack of information on potential markets in developing countries posed a major obstacle to stepping up trade among them.

He said major companies in developed countries, on the other hand, had detailed information of the country they wanted to invest or, had invested in.

To overcome this problem, the Group of 15 (G-15) developing countries has established the South Investment, Trade and Technology Data Exchange Centre (SITTDEC) which provides information on trade and investment opportunities in developing countries.

Abdullah said Tunisia had shown interest in SITTDEC and that the centre's director-general, Haji Salleh Marzuki of Malaysia, would come here to give a briefing. -- more

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Mahathir-privatisation 3 (last) Tunis

Also at the talks, Dr Mahathir informed Dr Karoui of the importance of the Bilateral Payments Arrangement (BPA) towards stepping up international trade.

The BPA would be able to convince investors of their payment because it was guaranteed by the central banks of the participating countries.

Malaysia and Tunisia will sign a BPA here today.

Abdullah said Dr Mahathir cited the example of trade between Malaysia and Venezuela having shot up by 400 per cent after both countries had signed the BPA.

Today, Dr Mahathir is scheduled to head a Malaysian delegation in talks with a Tunisian side led by Dr Karoui.

He is also scheduled to have lunch with Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leader Yasser Arafat who is based here. -- Bernama

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