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MALAYSIA TO RECRUIT MORE SKILLED WORKERS FROM PAKISTAN

From Amin Husaini Harun

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(P) MAHATHIR'S OVERSEAS TRIPS...
ISLAMABAD, Feb 15 (Bernama) -- Malaysia plans to recruit more skilled and semi-skilled workers from Pakistan to meet the demand for such workers in Malaysia.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mahathir said this at a delegation-level discussion at the prime minister's office, here, today, the second day of his four-day official visit to Pakistan.

The Pakistani delegation was led by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

The 15-member Malaysia delegation included Foreign Minister Datuk Ahmad Abdullah Badawi, International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz and Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Dr Hamid Othman.

The Foreign Ministry's deputy secretary-general, Datuk Halim Ali, in a briefing for Malaysian reporters, said the discussion centred on bilateral economic issues. -- more

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At the discussion, Nawaz expressed hope that Malaysia would help reduce the trade imbalance which was now heavily in Malaysia's favour.

He said Pakistan wanted Malaysia to buy more of its goods like engineering products and rice and hoped that more of its construction companies would be awarded contracts by Malaysia.

Halim said Dr Mahathir agreed to consider Pakistan's requests.

He said the two prime ministers agreed to discuss expanding the existing technical cooperation between the two countries.

On international issues, he said the two parties expressed concern over the role of the United Nations and the western countries which were slow in extending assistance to Bosnia-Herzegovina. -- more

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Halim said Nawaz briefed the visitors on the situation in Kashmir and expressed hope for understanding from Malaysia on the issue.

After the discussion, the prime minister's delegation visited Peshawar and the Khyber Pass on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border.

The group included Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali and the Malaysian High Commissioner to Pakistan, Datuk Yusof Hashim.

The Malaysian delegation, said to be the biggest foreign group to visit the border area, were escorted under heavy military guard throughout the journey from Peshawar to the Khyber Pass, about 70km away.

Dr Mahathir and his delegation were given a briefing on the Khyber Rifles team which was set up in November, 1978, specially to guard the border area which is administered by the Federal Administered Tribal Area under its commandant, Kol Hassan Shah.

They were entertained to dances by the local ethnic groups at the Khyber Pass Rifle camp.

The visitors then returned to Peshawar where they were briefed on the town's development.

At night Nawaz hosted a dinner for the Malaysian delegation in Islamabad. -- Bernama

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