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Mahathir-visits

VISITS TO BANGLADESH AND PAKISTAN HAVE ACHIEVED AIMS, SAYS MAHATHIR

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KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 18 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad returned from his visits to Bangladesh and Pakistan today saying that they have achieved the objectives to foster relations and enhance trade and economic cooperation with these countries.

The prime minister said many areas of cooperation had been identified by the government and private sector leaders in the delegation.

"I found the two countries to be so friendly with us and this is a good sign for enhancing relations," he said at the airport after a six-hour flight from Karachi.

He was accompanied by his wife, Datuk Seri Datin Paduka Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali and Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

The prime minister and his delegation were in Bangladesh for three days from Friday before visiting Pakistan.

He said: "I believe that we can follow up the visits with trade activities and cooperation between the governments," -- more

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Dr Mahathir said the visits could also enhance cooperation between Asean and the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) and the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

Malaysia might propose to Asean to invite the secretariats of these organisations to its ministerial and heads of government conferences, he said.

He said although the ECO was still in its early stages, there was potential for Malaysia to use it as a trade link with the countries of Central Asia through Pakistan.

"Pakistan is the gateway to the sea for these countries which have no ports and are located far away from the sea,+ he said.

He said Pakistan would build new ports which could be used by these countries. -- Bernama

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