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Mahathir-success

MAHATHIR DESCRIBES VISITS TO UZBEK/IRAN SUCCESSFUL

From Abdul Rahman Sulaiman

TEHERAN, April 6 <sup>93</sup> (Bernama) -- ~~Datuk~~ Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad left here for Jeddah today to perform the umrah after a "very successful" eight-day visit to Uzbekistan and Iran which resulted in the signing of no less than eight agreements to enhance relations and boost trade with the two Islamic states. ② ~~strip~~ overseas

A beaming Dr Mahathir told Malaysian newsmen, after a dinner here hosted in his honour by accompanying Malaysian businessmen, that the visit had not only cemented a better relationship between the Malaysia and the two states but also between himself and the Uzbek and Iranian leaders.

Among others, the Prime Minister met Uzbek President Islam Karimov and Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani.

He said: "From discussions I had with them, the two leaders showed their interest in making Malaysia a model state.

"I feel deeply honoured and proud for this. I shall do every thing possible to not disappoint them." -- more

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The eight agreements, involving the government and private sector are the Protocol of Intent signed with Uzbekistan pending the formal establishment of a Joint Economic Commission; a US\$600-million contract between Petronas and the Iranian National Oil Company for the daily purchase of 55,000 barrels of Iranian crude by the Malaysian petroleum company beginning in May; a joint venture contract for the development of telecommunication network services in Iran's Qeshm island between Technology Resources Industries Berhad and the Qeshm Free Trade Area Authority; an agency agreement between Iran Mines Export Development Company (IMEDC) and Roslan Baba architect (RBA) to distribute marble and granite in Malaysia;

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Malaysia's Ekran Berhad and the Qeshm Free Trade Area Authority for the development of a hotel project on the island; MOU between Pars Investment and Development Company of Iran (PIDC) and the Palm Oil Research Institute of Malaysia to enable both organisations to cooperate in provision of technical advisory services in packaging, blending, quality monitoring of palm oil and palm kernel oil in the Iranian market; -- more

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MOU between Malaysia's Kobena-KLG and Iran's Industrial Development and Renovation Corporation (IDRC) to pave the way for both companies to establish business and technical cooperation in oil and gas activities in both countries and MOU between Iran Steel Group and the Malaysia-Bangladesh Investment Company to enable the two to explore joint venture possibilities in the field of cold storage and warehousing, respectively, for perishable imports and exports and prefabricated building materials.

Dr Mahathir said in addition to those agreements, the two governments also made several other suggestions to enhance economic cooperation with Malaysia which would have to be studied further.

Describing the outcome of the visit as "very successful" he said he would report to the Cabinet and take every possible measure to ensure that all the agreements signed so far would be realised.

On the question of trade financing feared by certain quarters to be a problem in respect of Iran due its lack of foreign exchange, Dr Mahathir said this should not be a problem as the two countries already had a Bilateral Payments Arrangement with payments being guaranteed by the respective central banks. -- more

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"Besides, we are not talking about selling. We are also buying, thus when you are talking about payment, we are only talking about paying the balance of the trade," he added.

The Prime Minister who yesterday also met several leading Iranian mullahs with considerable influence on government policies, said he was pleased that they shared his views on the need to revive the unity of Muslims for the betterment of the community in the world.

They also agreed with him that Muslims and their leaders should not allow their differences, particularly in the interpretations of religious teachings, to divide them, he added.

They should encourage the ummah to acquire modern skills, technology and knowledge to enable them to compete with non-Muslims and exert sizeable influence on world affairs, he said.

He said there were now indications that the Muslim world was moving towards the revival of its past glory.

Malaysia, which did not want to be left behind by this wave, would work hard to contribute towards this awakening, he added. -- more

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Dr Mahathir, who was accompanied by his wife Datin Seri Datuk Paduka Dr Siti Hasmah and a 25-member official delegation which includes Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Primary Industries Minister Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik, Law Minister Datuk Syed Hamid Albar, Terengganu Menteri Besar Tan Sri Wan Mokhtar Ahmad and Selangor Menteri Besar Tan Sri Muhammad Taib Muhammad, was in Uzbekistan from March 31 to April 3 and in Iran from April 3 to 6.

Also with them during the visit was a 55-member business delegation led by the chairman of the Malaysian Chamber of Commerce Tan Sri Wan Azmi Wan Hamzah -- Bernama

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