

Dr M: Customs, moral values will be retained

From Tony Francis,
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BANDAR SERI BEGAWRN, Sun. — Malaysia wants to be a developed country which is equal to other developed countries but retaining its customs and moral values, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight.

The Prime Minister emphasised that Vision 2020 was not just the acquisition of material and intellectual wealth to achieve developed status but also about maintaining indigenous customs and morals.

He was speaking at a dinner hosted by Malaysian Ambassador to Brunei Datuk Mustafa Mohammad at Rumah Malaysia here. Some 350 Malaysians from the Malaysia Citizens' Committee attended the dinner.

Dr Mahathir and an 18-

member delegation flew in to a red-carpet welcome this afternoon for a three-day official visit to the sultanate at Sultan Hassanal Bol- kiah's invitation.

"All those in Malaysia have a responsibility of achieving the aims of Vision 2020 and even those abroad can help to achieve them," Dr Mahathir said.

Although the next generation would benefit the most from the Vision 2020, nevertheless, he said Malaysians should now continue to work towards the goals.

"Even I will not live to see Vision 2020 being realised but we all have to work hard to achieve it," he added.

The Prime Minister was also pleased that Malaysians in Brunei remembered the important dates in the country's history by organising the Malaysia Day Open Bowling championships today.

"It is heartening to see that Malaysians abroad do not forget about their country and that they exhibit the Malaysian spirit," he said, adding they should continue to maintain the country's good name abroad.

Saying that this spirit was also exhibited in other countries, he said the 25,000 Malaysians in Brunei were the unofficial ambassadors whose duty was to enhance bilateral ties between Malaysia and Brunei.

Earlier, the Malaysian Citizens' Committee surprised Dr Mahathir when the members brought out a 13.5-kg cake to celebrate his 67th birthday.

The committee was set up two years ago following a proposal from Mustafa, who took up his appointment here in 1961.

Dr Mahathir's visit is to promote trade and closer bilateral relations.

The executive jet touched down at 3.12pm at the Brunei International Airport.

Among those at the airport to welcome Dr Mahathir and the Malaysian delegation were Foreign Minister Prince Mohamad Bolkiah, the younger brother of the Brunei Ruler and Cabinet Ministers.

He later inspected a guard-of-honour mounted by 111 members of the Royal Brunei Armed Forces.

Members of the Malaysian delegation were Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Sarawak Chief Minister Tan Sri Taib Mahmud, Attorney-General Tan Sri Abu Talib Othman, Defence Forces chief Tan Sri Abdul Rahman Abdul Hamid and Deputy Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Noor.

Others in the Malaysian delegation included Eco-

nomics Minister Datuk Seri Ali Abdul Hassan Sulaiman, Brunei LNG president Tan Sri Azizan Zainul Abidin, Education Ministry secretary-general Datuk Mohamad Noordin Hassan, National Survey and Mapping department director-general Abdul Majid Mohamed and National Malay Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Tan Sri Wan Azmi Wan Hamzah.

Dr Mahathir spent the first day meeting the Malaysians here.

Two hours after his arrival, he was at the Utama Bowling Centre to launch the Malaysia Day Open bowling championships which offered a Proton Saga 1.5 for a perfect game.

He then attended a dinner at Rumah Malaysia hosted by Mustafa.

His itinerary tomorrow includes a visit to the Bru-

nei Shell Oil Platform Champion 7 in Seria and the Petronas LNG plant in Lumut, one of the biggest in the world with sales of five million tonnes a year.

Later in the day, he will have an audience with the Sultan. During the four-eyed meeting, they are expected to focus on ways to enhance trade ties and discuss other bilateral and regional issues.

Dr Mahathir will attend a State banquet at Istana Nurul Iman tomorrow night.

On Tuesday, he will have an audience with Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah to bid him farewell.

Earlier, Abdullah speaking to reporters at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport, said Malaysia hoped that a solution would be found to border problems

□ PLEASE TURN TO
PAGE 2, COL 8

Amicable solution to border issues expected

□ FROM PAGE ONE

with Brunei in talks between the Prime Minister and the Sultan.

Abdullah said Dr Mahathir will also discuss Brunei's claims over Limbang.

Abdullah, speaking just before flying off to Brunei, added that the Spratly islands issue would also be discussed.

"We are confident of reaching an amicable and peaceful settlement to the border issues," he said.

Among those at the airport to send off Dr Mahathir and the delegation were Deputy Home Minister Datuk Megat Junid Megat Ayub and other dignitaries.

The delegation, which includes several top businessmen, will also discuss the possibility of enhancing economic and trade co-operation between the two countries.

Abdullah said the Malaysian delegation would also hold talks with Brunei leaders on educational co-operation.

"There are many Brunei students seeking tertiary education in Malaysia.

"They are now required to obtain visas to pursue their studies here. We will try and find alternative procedures to make it easier for them," he said.

Brunei is Malaysia's smallest trading partner in Asean with total trade between the two countries last year amounting to RM385.3 million. Exports of Malaysian goods to Brunei were worth RM381 million which represents only 0.19 per cent of its external trade.

Brunei's major trading partners are Japan, Singapore, Britain and the United States.

Officials said there were lots of potential for wider trade relations between the two countries.