

Turkish Premier praises Dr M's decisive policies

From
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ANKARA, Tues. — Turkish Prime Minister Prof Dr Tansu Ciller said today Malaysia had gained importance not only regionally but also globally owing to the decisive policies of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Speaking at the welcoming ceremony in front of her office here, Ciller said Malaysia had always played an important role in the region owing to its strategic location with structural heritage and strong economy.

In the light of this, she said the two countries would seek ways and means to increase and diversify their relations in bilateral talks during Dr Mahathir's three-day visit to Turkey which began today.

The Turkish Prime Minister said her country wished to have a comprehensive and co-operative relationship with Malaysia, especially in the economic field.

She was also hopeful the large delegation of businessmen accompanying Dr Mahathir would set up contacts with Turkish businessmen to evaluate the possibilities of further co-operation.

She said the visit, which was taking place at a time when important developments were unfolding in both regions, would provide the two countries with opportunities to exchange views on regional and international issues.

The Turkish people were also appreciative of the interest shown by Dr Mahathir, who had been to Turkey on several occasions, including for an official visit in 1983.

Dr Mahathir said he was glad to be back in Turkey and welcomed the opportunity to discuss issues that hopefully would enhance relations between the two countries, especially in the area of economic co-operation.

He admitted that economic collaboration between the two countries was not up to mark and hoped new areas could be identified to enhance trade and economic relations.

Earlier, when inspecting the guard of honour, Dr Mahathir greeted them in the traditional Turkish greeting of *Merhaba Asker* (hello soldiers) *Nasilsiniz?* (how are you?)

The soldiers replied: *Sagol* (fine).

The *Negaraku* and the Turkish national anthem were played. The Prime Minister and his official delegation then visited the Atatürk Mausoleum where he laid a wreath.

After the welcoming ceremony, the two Prime Ministers held a four-eyed meeting and later joined their Ministers and officials for a brief discussion.

The ministerial meeting continued into the evening after the two Prime Ministers left.

Tomorrow, Dr Mahathir will call on President Suley-

Dr M also visiting Jordan and Turkmenistan

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Demirel at the Presidential Palace here.

In the evening, the Prime Minister and his party will leave for Istanbul to continue his visit.

He will also visit the Turkish Aerospace Industries

(TAI) facility which assembles light transport and fighter aircraft before addressing a group of Turkish businessmen in Istanbul to visit the famous Suleymaniye Mosque there.

On Thursday, the entourage will leave for Amman for the second leg of the trip.

The Prime Minister and his party will be in Jordan for three days during which he will hold talks with Prime Minister Dr Abdulsalam Majali in Amman.

Jordan is seeking Malaysian assistance to restructure its civil service. It has requested Malaysia to extend credit facilities under its Palm Oil Credit Payment Arrangement.

Following the talks, the Prime Ministers will witness the signing of four agreements between the

two countries. They are a Trade Agreement, the Investment Guarantee Agreement, the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement and the Technical, Scientific and Cultural Cooperation Agreement.

In Turkmenistan, the Prime Minister and his delegation will visit the capital, Ashkabat, and Charjou, an industrial city near the north eastern border with Uzbekistan.

While in Ashkabat, Dr Mahathir will hold talks with President Saparmurat Niyazov, who was in Malaysia last year, and would also address a special meeting with Cabinet Ministers and heads of department to share with them Malaysia's experience in the management of its economy.

Turkmenistan, a republic of the former Soviet Union, is now in the process of opening up its economy and is aggressively attracting foreign investments.

The country, which is rich in oil and gas reserves, is also keen to offer itself as the staging point for Malaysia's exports to Central Asia.

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