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Hamid-Saudi

MALAYSIA SEEKS TO BOOST COOPERATION IN DEFENCE WITH SAUDI ARABIA

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 10 (Bernama) -- Malaysia is keen to step up cooperation with Saudi Arabia in defence and is planning exchange of visits by military officials of the two countries.

"Saudi Arabia is very advanced in the military field and there are many things that we can learn from their experience," Defence Minister Datuk Syed Hamid Albar said today.

Syed Hamid, who accompanied Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to Saudi Arabia earlier this week, said although the visit was aimed mainly at boosting trade ties between the two countries, he took the opportunity to meet Saudi defence officials.

He told reporters this after presenting Bank Simpanan Nasional Premium savings certificates to 60 military personnel and civilian staff of the Defence Ministry.

Syed Hamid said Malaysia is looking forward to receive Saudi Arabia's Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister in Malaysia soon followed later by a visit by the country's air force chief.

On the proposal to increase the training allowance for recruits, the minister said approval is awaited from the relevant government agency.

He expects the proposal to be approved as police recruits and those in some other government agencies are already receiving the higher allowance.

In his speech earlier, Syed Hamid called on those who received the BSN certificates to keep them as a long term investment.

The ministry bought RM1.8 million worth of the certificates to be given to excellent service award winners, the first ministry to do so.

BSN chairman Datuk Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said many corporate bodies are buying the premium savings certificates to be given out as bonus and prizes, with the total amount reaching about RM15 million a year.

He said total purchase of the certificates as of last month was RM456 million, he said.

He also said that BSN currently has 10.3 million savers with total savings of RM5.8 billion, including 5.3 million GIRO account holders. --

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