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Mahathir-UN

MALAYSIA TO STUDY WAYS TO IMPROVE THE RUNNING OF THE UN

By: Syed Jamil Jaafar

LISBON, Sept 23 (Bernama) -- Malaysia, rather dissatisfied with the running of the United Nations, will take advantage of the election of its permanent representative as the president of the general assembly to study what needs to be done to improve the world body.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said that although Malaysia did not foresee any unusual role for the country, the election of Tan Sri Razali Ismail had placed it in a position which could influence the running of the UN.

Dr Mahathir was speaking to Malaysian journalists at the end of his three-day visit to Portugal. He leaves for New York today to attend the UN general assembly.

"We have specific views regarding the UN and so far we are not satisfied over several matters, like the way the body acted in Bosnia-Herzegovina or failing to act in other places.

"I believe Tan Sri Razali has certain ideas on what should be done," he said.

Asked whether the UN actions from now on would be regarded as bias towards Malaysia following Razali's election, Dr Mahathir said that the question did not arise at all.

"I don't think bias towards Malaysia (but) bias towards the truth, that is what should be done," he said.

Dr Mahathir is scheduled to address the UN general assembly on Sept 27 and according to officials, he would as usual be expected to be frank in his views on the running and role of the world body.

On his working visit to Portugal, Dr Mahathir said that Lisbon was keen to enhance relations with Kuala Lumpur.

Dr Mahathir yesterday met Portugal's Prime Minister Antonio Guterres. He called on President Jorge Sampaio on his arrival on Friday.

"Portugal sees the Asean region as a dynamic region with Malaysia as the gateway to the region," he said.

Guterres told him that Portugal was keen to further upgrade economic and trade ties with Malaysia and towards this end, plans to open an embassy in Kuala Lumpur.

At present, Portugal has only one office in Asean, that is in Bangkok.

Dr Mahathir said that the possibility of establishing direct air links between the two countries would also be studied.

Meanwhile, exchange of visits and promotional efforts like the Portugal festival in Malaysia and the Malaysia festival here would be further intensified. -- BERNAMA

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