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Mahathir-relation

NEW CHAPTER IN MALAYSIA-KUWAIT TIES

By: Abdul Rahman Ahmad

KUWAIT CITY, April 6 (Bernama) -- Malaysia and Kuwait today opened a new chapter in their bilateral relations with several understandings achieved including the re-establishment of aviation and maritime services.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said both sides agreed that further talks be held as soon as possible.

Kuwait will send a delegation to Malaysia to study the country's privatisation concept and establish cooperation in petroleum-related fields, he told Malaysian reporters after bilateral talks with Kuwaiti leaders here.

"The bilateral ties, although good, are still at a low level especially in trade which need to be upgraded," he said.

Dr Mahathir is on the second-day of a three-day visit to this Gulf state.

Dr Mahathir was confident that cooperation in aviation and maritime would boost trade relations between the two countries.

He said cooperation between the airlines of both countries could be implemented through the code sharing to enable Malaysia Airlines to fly directly to other destinations.

He also explained that both countries could hold discussions on landing rights for both airlines.

He said Malaysia Airlines had previously flown here on stopover to Europe and London because the aircrafts then could not fly on long-hauls.

However, he said as Malaysia Airlines had acquired aircrafts which could fly longer journeys and Kuwait Airlines which had ceased its operations to Kuala Lumpur, both countries felt it was prudent to re-establish cooperation in air services.

He said Malaysian businessmen should pay more attention to Kuwait which was a rich nation and imported wide-range of goods as it did not have manufacturing industries.

"We only know that Kuwait produces petroleum and in fact we buy the product from Kuwait," he said.

He said Malaysia had informed the Kuwaiti government that most of the Malaysian products were produced by Malaysian companies although they used foreign labels.

"We hope Kuwait can accept Malaysian-made products which are on par with those produced by developed countries," he said.

Dr Mahathir was confident that his trip to Kuwait would enhance bilateral trade relations.

He advised Malaysian businessmen to conduct studies in areas that they wished to cooperate with their Kuwaiti counterparts.

He said Kuwait was keen to study the privatisation concept which they considered to be successful.

"We have invited them to have discussions with relevant parties such as the Economic Planning Unit (EPU) in the implementation of the concept," he said.

On the cooperation between Petronas and the Kuwait Petroleum company, the Prime Minister said both corporations could undertake joint ventures in oil exploration in new areas in their respective countries or a third country. -- BERNAMA

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