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Mahathir-Goh

DR MAHATHIR MAKES FAREWELL CALL ON GOH

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 17 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad made a farewell call on his Singaporean counterpart, Goh Chok Tong, who departs today after a two-day working visit.

Dr Mahathir then drove Goh in a Proton Putra car to the All-Asia Broadcasting Centre (Astro) on the outskirts of the capital to accompany him for a tour of the satellite broadcasting station.

After visiting Astro, Goh is scheduled to return to Singapore by road with a stopover in Melaka. Earlier, Goh received a call from Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Dr Mahathir and Goh met officially yesterday, their third within a month, and discussed the regional economic crisis and improving bilateral ties.

A joint communique is expected today on the outcome of of their discussions.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi told reporters after the meeting that ties between the two countries were "back to normal" after a spat last year caused by Singaporean Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew's remarks about crime in Johor for which Lee later apologised.

Goh said Malaysia and Singapore were now on the "right track" to achieving better relations and and officials from both sides have been directed to intensify efforts to solve differences between the two countries.

Dr Mahathir and Goh had discussed the two countries' overlapping claim on Pulau Batu Putih, an island off Johor which Singapore calls Pedra Branca.

They also delved on a new water agreement to supply water to the island republic after the present contract expires on 2061 and the development of land in Singapore belonging to the Malaysian railway company, Keretapi Tanah Melayu Berhad.

Goh said he had a good discussion with Dr Mahathir centred on the regional currency crisis and how to stabilise the regional currencies which have been fluctuating against the American dollar.

He said Dr Mahathir explained to him the idea of using regional currencies for trading and both of them had asked their central bank governors to look into the matter.

The two leaders also expressed concern at the situation in Indonesia where riotings were reported in many parts of the country in protests against rising food prices. -- BERNAMA

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