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Sudan urges implementation of trade, economic pacts

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - The Sudanese Government hopes Malaysia will implement the bilateral trade and economic agreements signed by both countries during Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's visit to Khartoum in May.

Its Foreign Relations Minister Dr Mustafa Osman Ismail said his visit here was to follow up on the efforts being taken by Malaysia to "put into action" the agreements.

"We hope there may be development in many aspects especially in the economic sphere," he said after meeting Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim today.

Dr Mustafa was accompanied by Bank of Sudan governor Dr Sabir Mohammed Elhassan and senior officials on a five-day visit.

Tomorrow, he will meet Dr Mahathir to brief him on efforts by Sudan to implement the agreements.

He will also meet Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik and Primary Industries Minister Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik to discuss bilateral trade and investment.

Dr Mustafa will also meet Sudanese businessmen here.

On his meeting with Anwar, Dr Mustafa said they discussed Malaysia's action on the agreements.

"We also discussed the venue and date for the next ministerial joint-committee meetings. As both countries are members of the Non-Aligned Movement and also the Organisation of Islamic Conference, we always co-operate and collaborate on international platforms."

He also urged Malaysia's Petronas to expand co-operation in developing Sudan's agricultural industry besides being involved in oil and gold prospecting.

Earlier, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said Malaysia might import beef and mutton from Sudan which were not only of high quality but reasonably priced.

"At present, Sudan exports beef and mutton to Middle Eastern and Gulf countries.

"We intend to import their beef, mutton and groundnut oil besides other products, to increase bilateral trade," he said after meeting Dr Mustafa at Wisma Putra.

Abdullah said Sudan had also asked to utilise Malaysia's palm oil credit arrangement as they wanted to purchase more of the commodity.

Sudan also recommended an air agreement be signed between its national airline and Malaysia Airlines to meet air travel needs between both countries.

"Our initial survey shows that Sudanese people residing in the Middle East and Gulf States really need an air service," he said.

"We are confident that Malaysia Airlines can organise its services there," he added.

Abdullah said the people of Sudan viewed Dr Mahathir's visit as a positive move in the wake of the Western media's negative portrayal of their country.

"In fact, Sudan has much potential and is now ready to be developed," he said.

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