

18 AUG 1999

Mahathir-Cooperation

MALAYSIA AND CHINA RENEW DETERMINATION, ENHANCE COOPERATION

By: Ali Mamat

BEIJING, Aug 18 (Bernama) -- Malaysia and China today renewed determination to continue to further enhance cooperation in all fields in the interest of the people of both countries as well as for world peace and stability.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his Chinese counterpart, Zhu Rongji, expressed this commitment at a one-hour meeting at the Great Hall of the People, here, which ended with the signing of three cooperation and joint-venture agreements between the two countries.

Dr Mahathir is on a three-day visit to China, beginning today.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar told Malaysian journalists after the discussions that the two leaders stressed the importance that relations between the two countries should be enhanced.

Zhu, in his welcoming speech, even described Dr Mahathir and Malaysia as "a true friend and China's close partner."

In efforts towards this end, Dr Mahathir agreed to consider the possibility of further facilitating the issuance of visas to the Chinese especially industrialists and investors wishing to visit Malaysia.

Syed Hamid said that an alternative being studied was the possibility of issuing visas to the Chinese at the points of entry in Malaysia.

However, the matter would be further discussed at the officials' level.

He said that Zhu had also agreed to Malaysia's request to set up a consulate in Shanghai and at the same time requested for the setting up of a Chinese consulate in Malaysia.

The site of the Malaysian consulate in Shanghai has been identified and will commence operations soon.

Syed Hamid said Malaysia also planned to set up a consulate in Kunming. The matter is however at the discussion stage.

At the meeting, Zhu further reiterated China's stand not to devalue the Renminbi, while Dr Mahathir stated Malaysia's firm stand on the "One China" policy.

The two leaders later witnessed the signing of cooperation and joint-venture agreements relating to the fields of science, technology and engineering as well as the setting up of a paper and pulp mill and the development of a forest plantation in Sabah.

Among members of the Malaysian delegation present were Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong, Primary Industries Minister Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik, International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz, Defence Minister Datuk Abang Abu Bakar Mustapha, Pulau Pinang Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon and Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Osu Sukam.

Tonight, Dr Mahathir will be hosted to a banquet by Zhu at the same hall.

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