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Hamid-Visit

MALAYSIA WANTS TO ESTABLISH EMBASSY IN ALGERIA

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 21 (Bernama) -- Malaysia is planning to set up an embassy in Algeria to reciprocate that country's establishment of its mission here, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said today.

He said he would raise the matter during his visit to that country for four days beginning Wednesday.

The purpose of the visit was to establish contacts with the new leadership and to explore new areas of cooperation, he told a news conference on his visits to that country, Oman and Egypt, from today.

During his visit to Algeria, Syed Hamid is expected to call on President Abdulaziz Bouteflika and Prime Minister Ahmed Benbitour and his counterpart, Youcef Youfi.

At present, the Malaysian ambassador to Italy is accredited to Algeria.

Total trade between Malaysia and Algeria in 1998 was RM60.71 million and Malaysia exported mainly textile, yarn, margarine and shortening, heating and cooking equipment. Algeria's exports to Malaysia are liquefied propane and butane and optical goods.

Syed Hamid said his visit to Egypt on Jan 23-26 is a follow-up of the visit of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in 1998 which took place prior to the G-15 summit in Cairo.

While there, Syed Hamid is expected to call on President Hosni Mubarak and Prime Minister Atief Obeid and his counterpart, Amr Moussa, and Economy Minister Yusof Boutros Ghali.

He is also expected to have a dialogue with Malaysian students studying there and make a visit to Sime Darby's palm oil factory in Ramadan City.

Total trade between both countries stood at RM1.2 billion, almost doubled the 1997 figure. The January-September 1999 figure stood at RM876 million. Malaysia exported palm oil, palm stearin, natural rubber and television receivers while Egypt's exports to Malaysia are products like fruits and nuts, floor covering and carpets, cotton and gravel.

While in Oman (Jan 21-23), Syed Hamid will attend the Council of Ministers' Meeting of the Indian Ocean Rim-Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC) on Sunday.

He said the issues to be deliberated by the council includes new membership particularly Pakistan, headquarters agreement, rules and procedures and the consideration of the report of the Working Group on Trade and Investment.

"As a country situated close to the Indian Ocean, it is logical for Pakistan to join the group," he said when asked whether India has given its green light to receive Pakistan as a new member as membership is based on the consensus reached by all 19 member states.

He said Malaysia became a member of the council in 1995 and among the benefits gained was Malaysia was able to explore new investment opportunities in the member states.

IOR-ARC was established in Mauritius in 1995 and its objectives include promoting sustainable growth and balanced development of the region and member states.

-- BERNAMA

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