

SUN 14 AUG 2001

Malaysia praised for role in UN

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon: Malaysia has been praised for its role in multilateral activities organised by United Nations agencies.

The message was conveyed to Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Syed Albar by the regional representative of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore and the Philippines, Raymond Anthony Hall, today.

During a meeting with Syed Hamid, Raymond handed him the commendation letter, praising Malaysia for the role it played in East Timor and the issue of refugees within the region.

He said UNHCR always viewed Malaysia as a good partner in solving some of the problems, and that Malaysians serving the UN have performed efficiently and professionally.

However, Syed Hamid said he was also informed of the refugee problems around the world where 30% of refugees and asylum seekers are from Muslim countries.

Therefore, he said, Raymond is seeking Malaysia's help by having multilateral cooperation among Muslim countries to help overcome the problems faced.

Syed Hamid also said any instability in the neighbouring countries within the region will spill over to Malaysia.

On Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's visit to Republic of Yemen from Aug 15, Syed Hamid said the purpose of the visit is to improve bilateral ties and also to improve trade and investment.

Among others, he said, is to find new markets for

made-in-Malaysia products and also joint oil exploration project with Petronas.

Syed Hamid said the Yemeni government is seeking Malaysia's help in drawing up the human resources and rural development programmes which in turn will attract Malaysia's private sector to invest in the Aden free trade area in Yemen.

He said this includes making Aden an entry point for Malaysian products to Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan, South Oman and Saudi Arabia, which has a market of 150 million consumers.

Mahathir is scheduled to meet Yemen Prime Minister Ba Jamal on Thursday before attending a bilateral delegation meeting, and signing of agreements on joint commission and cooperation on training for civil servants.

Syed Hamid, on behalf of the government, will be signing two MoUs - one will be on the establishment of a joint commission between both countries, and the other on the cooperation in the field of civil service, personnel management and public administration.