

20 MAR 2001

Mahathir-Bosnia

M'SIA TO CONTINUE HELPING BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, SAYS MAHATHIR

PUTRAJAYA, March 20 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Malaysia will continue to assist in the reconstruction of Bosnia and Herzegovina following the Balkan war in the 1990s.

He conveyed this during talks with visiting Bosnian President Dr Halid Genjac at his office here today, according to Deputy Foreign Minister Datuk Dr Leo Michael Toyad.

Briefing Bernama after the meeting, Toyad said Dr Mahathir indicated that Malaysia would step up technical cooperation with Bosnia and Herzegovina, including training Bosnians through various technical programmes.

Toyad said both leaders also discussed ways to strengthen bilateral economic and trade ties, among other things.

"Now, we have Malaysian companies going there to find opportunities for joint investment with Bosnian companies," Toyad said.

Toyad said Bosnia was keen in strengthening ties with Malaysia because of Dr Mahathir's firm support especially for the Balkan state's rebuilding and reconstruction efforts in the aftermath of the war.

Dr Mahathir and Dr Genjac later witnessed the signing of a US\$20 million (RM76 million) loan agreement between Bank Islam (Labuan) Ltd (BILL) and Bosmal D.O.O. (Bosmal) for land acquisition and construction of a multi-storey commercial-cum-residential complex in Sarajevo.

Bosmal D.O.O. is a joint venture between investors of the two countries.

BILL, a subsidiary of Bank Islam Malaysia Berhad (BIMB), operates from the Labuan International Offshore Financial Centre.

BILL's chairman Datuk Ahmad Tajudin Abdul Rahman and chief executive officer Raja Zainal Alam Shah Raja Abdullah Omar signed on behalf of the bank while Hassan Jamaludin and Nijaz Sabanovic inked the document for Bosmal.

Dr Genjac, who arrived here yesterday for a four-day private visit, is scheduled to visit the Multimedia Development Corporation (MDC) in Cyberjaya, the Petronas Twin Towers -- the world's tallest building in the heart of Kuala Lumpur -- and the National Institute of Public Administration (Intan).

He is also scheduled to visit the historic city of Melaka south of Kuala Lumpur tomorrow.

-- BERNAMA
AFY MAM RYN