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CASTRO TO VISIT MALAYSIA BY YEAR-END, SAYS VISITING FM

PUTRAJAYA, Feb 20 (Bernama) -- President Fidel Castro will visit Kuala Lumpur by year-end to strengthen Cuba-Malaysia bilateral ties, Cuban Foreign Minister Felipe Perez Roque said.

Roque conveyed this to Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad when he called on the Prime Minister at his office here today.

During their meeting, Roque delivered a letter from Castro to Dr Mahathir confirming the Cuban leader's desire to make an official visit to Malaysia within the year.

Speaking to reporters later, Roque said he also conveyed to the prime minister Cuba's appreciation of Malaysia's decision to open an embassy in Havana by the end of the month.

He said the move signified both countries' willingness to strengthen bilateral ties.

Cuba opened its embassy in Kuala Lumpur in 1998.

Roque said Havana thanked Dr Mahathir for steadfastly speaking out at world forums against the economic blockade on and isolation of Cuba.

-- BERNAMA

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