

21 SEP 2001

Myanmar-Visit

MYANMAR PREMIER VISITING MALAYSIA NEXT WEEK

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 21 (Bernama) -- Myanmar Prime Minister Senior General Than Shwe will arrive here on Tuesday for a three-day visit.

This will be his second visit to Malaysia; the first was in 1996 during which an agreement between the two governments on economic, scientific and technical cooperation was signed.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad visited Myanmar in January during which Malaysian companies were invited to invest in that country, especially in the processing of raw material, and import Myanmar products.

According to the itinerary of Than Shwe's visit issued by Wisma Putra today, he is scheduled to meet Dr Mahathir in Putrajaya on Tuesday. Both leaders are expected to discuss bilateral matters as well as regional issues of common concern.

This will be followed by a delegation meeting and the signing of bilateral agreements between Malaysia and Myanmar.

Than Shwe, who is also Myanmar's State Peace and Development Council chairman, and the delegation are scheduled to attend a dinner hosted by Dr Mahathir.

The Myanmar delegation will visit the Multimedia Development Corporation and Petronas Twin Towers on Wednesday before departing for Langkawi. They will leave for Yangon from the island on Thursday.

Myanmar, covering 676,577 sq km, is the largest country in the Southeast Asian mainland in terms of land size, and shares borders with Bangladesh, India, China, Laos and Thailand.

It became a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) in 1997.

With a 50 million population, the country has a large supply of cheap labour and untapped natural resources.

Malaysia is Myanmar's sixth largest investor with its companies actively involved in 12 projects and having investments totalling RM1.248 billion.

Areas of investment include furniture manufacturing and the production of apparels, toys, food products and oil and gas, hotel, tourism and real estate development.

According to statistics, total trade between Malaysia and Myanmar last year amounted to RM1.142 bilion as against RM1.107 billion in 1999.

Malaysia's main exports to Myanmar include crude petroleum, vegetable oil, margarine, plastic and glass products while its imports from Myanmar comprise mainly agricultural products.

Malaysia has been appointed by United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan to try to resolve the conflict in Myanmar between the government and the National League for Democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

Tan Sri Razali Ismail, the former Malaysian Permanent Representative to the UN, is now the UN Special Envoy to Myanmar.

-- BERNAMA

HS AFY SK