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PM holds talks with Bahrain counterpart

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today called on his Bahraini counterpart Shaikh Khalifa bin Salman Al-Khalifa at the Palace of Golden Horses hotel in Seri Kembangan here.

Dr Mahathir spent 45 minutes with Shaikh Khalifa discussing bilateral and economic ties between both countries.

Shaikh Khalifa is on a three-day visit to Malaysia accompanied by a 55-member delegation.

Briefing reporters later Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said Shaikh Khalifa thanked Dr Mahathir and described his visit as "most successful despite being a brief one".

Syed Hamid said the Bahraini prime minister also expressed wish for more effective relations with Malaysia, particularly in economic ties.

Shaikh Khalifa also invited Mahathir to visit Bahrain later, according to Syed Hamid. He said Shaikh Khalifa was impressed with Malaysia's progress and commended the country's economic advancement and political stability.

Malaysia's good planning was something that Bahrain could emulate, the Bahraini said during the meeting, according to Syed Hamid.

During their talks Dr Mahathir asked Bahrain to consider a proposal for the establishment of an Islamic financial services board based in Kuala Lumpur and expressed hope that Bahrain would invest more in Malaysia, said Syed Hamid.

Shaikh Khalifa looked forward to having follow-up visits by Malaysian officials and ministers to determine areas of bilateral cooperation, the foreign minister said.

According to Syed Hamid, Dr Mahathir accepted Shaikh Khalifa's invitation to Bahrain for which the date would be decided later.

Meanwhile, the Bahraini Foreign Minister Shaikh Mohammed Mubarak Al-Khalifa said his prime minister and delegation had very successful and fruitful discussions during the visit.

He said both countries had agreed to establish a joint commission to enhance bilateral relation, particularly economic cooperation.

He said the signing of a memorandum of understanding could assist Bahrain in developing its new port and Port Salman.

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