

# Malaysia and North Korea sign two contracts

KUALA LUMPUR: The first visit by a high-level North Korean delegation to Malaysia has been marked with the signing of two agreements between both countries after discussions between the two governments.

The two agreements were on palm oil credit and payment and a cultural exchange programme.

Primary Industries Minister Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik and Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Kadir Sheikh Fadzir signed on behalf of Malaysia.

North Korean Peoples Assembly supreme leader Kim Yong-nam is in the country, leading a 33-member delegation for a three-day official visit in an effort to strengthen bilateral ties.

The delegation, which arrived on Sunday, was given a state welcome at Parliament Square and received on arrival by Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Syed Putra Jamalullail.

Kim later had bilateral discussions with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in Putrajaya.

Acting Foreign Minister Datuk Azmi Khalid said the palm oil loan agreement, worth US\$10mil (RM38mil), was the second such credit agreement with North Korea.

North Korea, he said, invited Malaysian companies to explore into energy and petroleum field as its resources had yet to be fully explored.

He said both leaders had similar views on current international and regional issues and Malaysia expressed full support to reunification of the two Koreas.

He also said both parties agreed to increase bilateral

trade. The trade volume was RM31mil a year.

Meanwhile, in a state banquet at Istana Negara, the King expressed Malaysia's full support for the steps being taken by North and South Korea towards resolving their differences and achieving unification.

Bernama reports that the King also hopes Kim's visit would further strengthen relations between the Ma-