

Dr M to boost trade relations with Myanmar

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PUTRAJAYA: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will hold talks with Myanmar leader Senior General Than Shwe on enhancing trade and investment opportunities during the Prime Minister's official two-day visit to Myanmar beginning tomorrow.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said the visit was to reciprocate the one made by Gen Than Shwe

to Malaysia last September.

He said Dr Mahathir would be accompanied by his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ah; International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz; Energy, Telecommunications and Multimedia Minister Datuk Leo Moggie; and a delegation of 300 people including government officials and businessmen.

Syed Hamid said Dr Mahathir would address the Malaysia-Myanmar technology conference, jointly organised by the Malaysian Industry Government Group for High Technology and the State Peace and Development Council of Myanmar.

He said the meeting between Dr Mahathir and Gen Than Shwe would be a chance to exchange views and

improve trade ties

Malaysia is the fourth largest foreign investor in Myanmar after Singapore, Britain and Thailand.

Malaysia's exports to Myanmar last year amounted to RM748.6mil, while imports from Myanmar were valued at RM297.1mil.

Syed Hamid said Dr Mahathir would also attend the signing of two memoranda

of understanding on joint oil exploration projects in Myanmar by Petronas and Myanmar's energy ministry and the construction of two mini-hydro plants.

On whether Myanmar opposition leader Aung San Su Kyi had asked to meet Dr Mahathir, he said she had not made a formal request but it would be for Myanmar to decide on any meeting.