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Syed Hamid-Iran

DINAR, TERRORISM TO TAKE CENTRESTAGE IN TALKS BETWEEN DR M, KHATAMI

KOTA TINGGI, July 20 (Bernama) -- Using dinar as another means to settle trade transactions and international terrorism are among issues expected to be discussed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Iranian President Seyed Mohammad Khatami who will make an official visit to Malaysia tomorrow.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said the use of dinar might be explored by the two leaders because Malaysia wants to know Iran's reaction on the idea mooted by Dr Mahathir.

"Using dinar as a mode of payment for trade is not to replace any currency but as another means of settlement of trade transactions, which is one of Dr Mahathir's favourite subject," he told reporters after opening Sekolah Agama Bandar here today.

Syed Hamid said Dr Mahathir had propagated that it would be good for many countries if there was a choice of currency to pay for trade transactions between countries.

"I believe Dr Mahathir will also discuss this matter," he said, adding that the prime minister might also touch on the settlement to the Palestine conflict with Khatami.

Replying to a question, Syed Hamid said there was a strong possibility that international terrorism would also be on the agenda of discussions between Malaysia and Iran during the three-day state visit.

"I'm sure they will discuss what Islamic countries should do, its (terrorism) impact on Islam and in the context of OIC (Organisation of Islamic Conference), that being the most current subject," he said.

Syed Hamid said Dr Mahathir had been one of the main proponents that terrorism must be handled and managed holistically and the prime minister had mentioned repeatedly that terrorism should not be associated with religion or with Islam.

"... and in this case, Iran has been one of the countries that has been spotlighted... highlighted or focused," he said.

Khatami will arrive tomorrow, heading a 91-member delegation, comprising five ministers, five deputy ministers and senior government officials.

The visit, at the invitation of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, is aimed at enhancing Malaysia-Iran bilateral ties and to step up cooperation in the economic field, especially in trade and investments.

Syed Hamid said Kuala Lumpur and Teheran had established cooperation in the petroleum industry and Iran was keen on several other sectors like telecommunications, tourism and education with Malaysia.

"In short, Dr Mahathir and President Khatami will discuss and exchange views on a wide range of international and regional issues," he said.

He said Khatami had expressed interest in the civilisation dialogue to narrow the gap between the different civilisations and to boost understanding on the various cultures to ensure a safer world for the well-being of the masses.

The Yang di-Pertuan Agong will host a state banquet in honour of Khatami who will also be entertained by the National Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Malaysia at a dialogue with the chambers which would also be attended by Dr Mahathir.

In conjunction with the visit, Syed Hamid said Malaysia and Iran would sign five memorandums of understanding (MoUs). Among them are in the field

of tourism, cooperation in information technology with the Multimedia
Development Corporation and avoidance of double taxation.

-- BERNAMA

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