

Terrorism and manpower on KL-Jakarta talks agenda

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BY PAUL GABRIEL

KUALA LUMPUR: Anti-terrorism co-operation, manpower recruitment and trade expansion will be among the main topics of discussion between Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Indonesian president Megawati Sukarnoputri at their second annual consultative meeting in Kuching tomorrow.

Both leaders will have more to talk about this time around as much has changed since their first meeting last March in Bali.

Two terrorist bombings, believed to be the work of the Jemaah Islamiah (JI) terror network, have rocked Indonesia, with the first occurring in Bali last October followed by this month's blast in Jakarta.

Officials said matters connected to the arrest of JI's Riduan Isamuddin, the Indonesian terrorist better known as Hambali, in Thailand recent-

ly may be on the agenda.

Indonesian and Malaysian security officials are working closely to root out the terror threat, and want to interrogate Hambali, who is now under the custody of the United States.

Indonesia's *charge d'affaires* here, Suherman Obon, said he expected these "topical issues" to be raised by his side.

"Indonesia is concerned with the threat posed by terrorism, and the annual meeting will be a good platform for both leaders to weigh our co-operation,

"We have good bilateral police liaison work and the Malaysian Government had also sent its experts to Jakarta to help in the investigations into the J.W. Marriot bombing," Suherman said before departing for Kuching yesterday.

"We are looking forward to forging closer co-operation with Malaysia to counter the terrorism threat," he said.

Foreign Minister Hasan

Wirayuda and several other key ministers will accompany Megawati.

Suherman said he also expected a new memorandum of understanding on the recruitment of Indonesian workers to be signed with Malaysia, adding that two meetings had been held at the senior officers level over the Indonesian-proposed draft agreement.

The agreement was initially supposed to be a comprehensive one covering all sectors of employment here, but had been scaled down to exclude domestic maids for now, he added.

"There are several clauses, involving recruitment procedures, travel costs and identification matters, in which we have not struck a compromise yet. But I believe these can be ironed out in time," he added.

He said the Indonesian team would also look into increasing bilateral trade with Malaysia.