

14 OCT 2003

OIC-Secretary

BANGLADESH TO RESOLVE OIC SEC-GEN POSER WITH MALAYSIA

PUTRAJAYA, Oct 14 (Bernama) -- Bangladesh and Malaysia will resolve the issue of the appointment of the new Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) secretary-general through discussion, Bangladesh Foreign Minister Manzur Morshed Khan said today.

"I can assure you one thing, that for Bangladesh and Malaysia there will not be two fighting candidates...we will come to a decision through discussion," he told reporters after bilateral talks with his Malaysian counterpart, Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar. on the sidelines of the 10th OIC summit here.

He was asked whether the appointment of the new OIC secretary-general was discussed during their meeting as both countries had indicated their intention to nominate their own candidates.

Bangladesh had named Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury, special advisor to the prime minister on parliamentary affairs, while Malaysia had said that it would bid for the post but stopped short of naming the candidate.

The present OIC secretary-general is Dr Abdelouahed Belkeziz of Morocco and his term will expire middle of next year.

Norshed Khan said Bangladesh had received written support for its candidate from many countries, including Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Brunei and Indonesia.

"For one, it doesn't go very well, and it has never happened that the chairman and secretary-general are from the same country, he said.

He said Chowdhury would be able to work with Malaysia as the new OIC chairman to revitalise the organisation.

On the future of the OIC, he said the leadership of Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who will retire as prime minister at end of the month, was very much needed by the organisation and the ummah.

He said Dr Mahathir, together with other eminent persons from the Muslim countries, could design the roadmap for OIC under the changing circumstances because the OIC was formed in 1969 with one agenda, that is the Palestinian problem.

"After he has brought Malaysia to what it is today...the Islamic ummah needs the leadership of Dr Mahatir and his vision, to take the OIC from now on, to do the restructuring and roadmap built around his leadership," he said.

He said the OIC must play a greater role as new challenges had emerged after the globalisation, the formation of World Trade Organisation, intellectual property rights concern and the Sept 11 2001 attacks on the United States.

"All these have to be addressed...you cannot say that it is not on the agenda, it has to be on the agenda...the statute and charter have to be looked into and revitalised, revamped, re-organised and reform must be brought in," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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