

Iran: We've nuke rights

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PUTRAJAYA: Iran's door for negotiations on its disputed nuclear programme remains open but its President Dr Mahmoud Ahmadinejad made it clear that Teheran has the right to have nuclear power for peaceful purposes.

"My nation has chosen its path. The position of my country on the nuclear energy issue has always been clear. We believe it is the right of the member nations (of the Nuclear non-Proliferation Treaty) to enjoy the peaceful nuclear technology.

"We will continue to travel on this road (of having nuclear power programme) under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

"While we are prepared to negotiate on different things, we are clearly not open to negotiate on our inalienable rights," he said at a joint press conference with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Badawi after both leaders headed their respective delegation for a closed-door meeting here yesterday.

The Iranian president is on a four-day visit to Malaysia.

Dr Ahmadinejad stressed that Iran had accorded the highest level of co-operation with the IAEA and would continue to do so.

He said that some parties were using the logic of the "Middle Ages" - by threatening and denying the rights of other nations although such methods no longer worked.

It has been reported that Iranian

officials will be meeting with representatives from France, Germany and Britain in Vienna today to further discuss the country's nuclear programme.

On the bilateral talks with Abdullah, Dr Ahmadinejad said he was pleased with the discussions he had with the Malaysian leader and efforts were made to further promote relations between Malaysia and Iran.

Abdullah said Malaysia and Iran would benefit from the many bilateral co-operations that were forged between both countries.

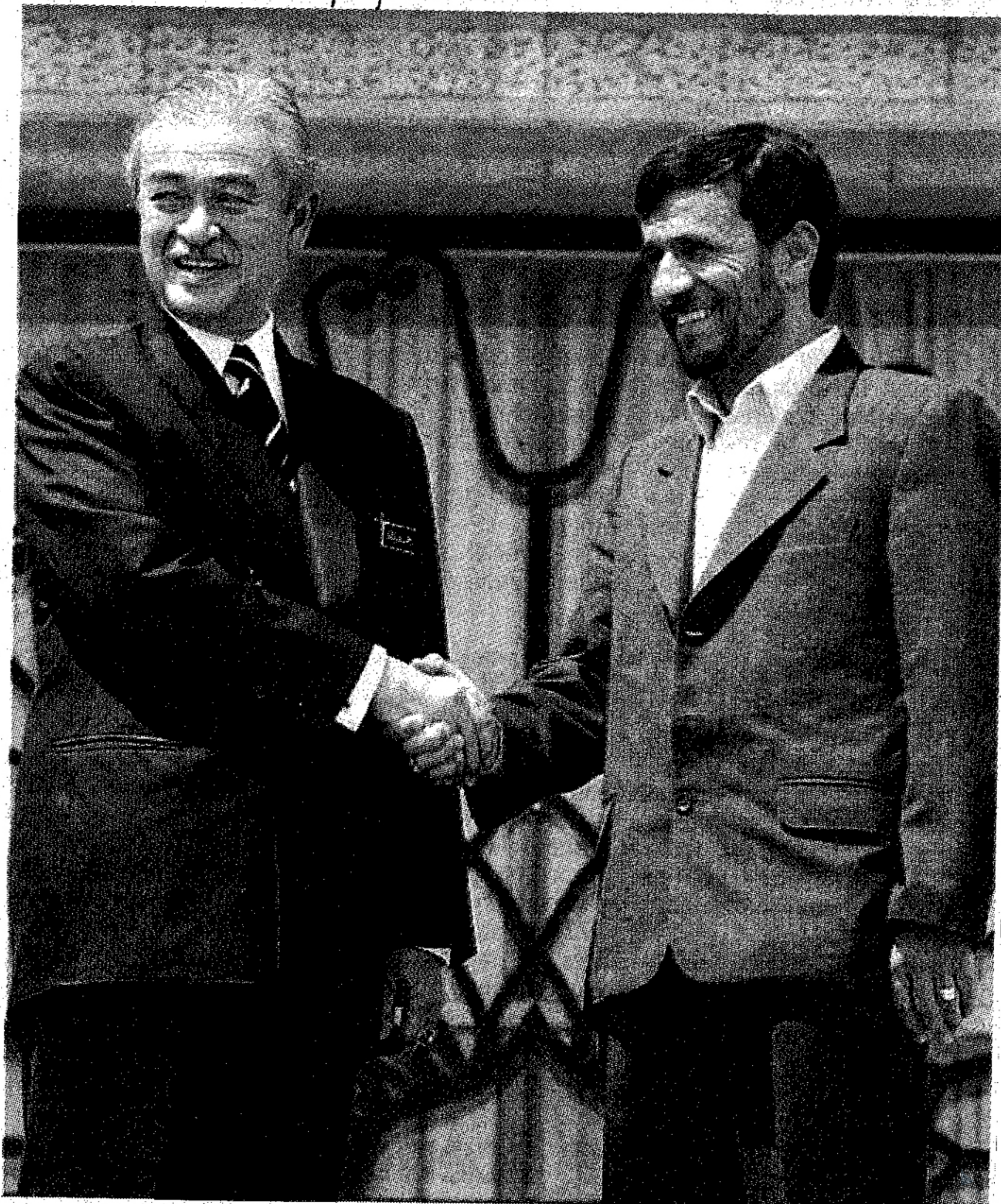
The Prime Minister said both he and Dr Ahmadinejad were committed to seeing the co-operation that had been agreed upon be implemented accordingly.

"Today's meeting is an achievement that can benefit Malaysia and Iran," he said.

Abdullah said Kuala Lumpur and Teheran had identified several areas of co-operation, including infrastructure, housing, railway, construction, tourism, and science and technology especially bio-technology.

"We hope that what have been decided today will be implemented," he added.

Four MoUs were signed between both Governments yesterday - on Co-operation in Co-operative Societies Development, A Letter of Acknowledgement for Co-operative in the Construction Sector and Urban Development, MoU between Export Import Bank (M) Bhd and Export Guarantee Fund of Iran and an MoU on Facilitative re-Insurance Agreement.



BRIDGING TIES: Abdullah greeting Dr Ahmedinejad at the Prime Minister's office in Putrajaya yesterday.