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PM: Collaboration key to stronger ties

M'sia keen to work closer with Turkmenistan to combat economic headwinds'

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PUTRAJAYA: Turkmenistan wants Petronas to widen its oil and gas exploration in the country by enhancing the company's participation in its downstream oil sector.

Its president Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov said this during a two-day official visit to Malaysia where he held meetings with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

"Malaysia will give serious consideration to President Berdimuhamedov's keen interest for Petronas to enhance its participation in downstream petroleum activities, particularly in petrochemical plants, as well as for us to consider participating in their pipeline projects to Afghanistan and Pakistan," said Najib at a joint press conference with his Turkmenistan counterpart at Perdana Putra here yesterday.

Najib said Petronas had invested US\$10bil (RM40.2bil) in Turkmenistan since it began exploring in the Central Asian country in 1996.

"We both agreed that the ties that we enjoy should be strengthened and deepened by increasing the level of cooperation and collaboration between our two sides.



Stronger ties:
Najib with Berdimuhamedov during a press conference at Perdana Putra. Berdimuhamedov is here for a two-day official visit.
— Bernama

"The development of gas facilities in the Caspian Sea is a prime example of our commitment to Turkmenistan.

"It is also a sense of pride that we are able to develop such high technology in Turkmenistan, to show our commitment and Petronas' capability as a company to develop oil and gas resources around the

world," said Najib.

Najib, who is also Finance Minister, expressed Petronas' commitment to become a "good corporate citizen" in Turkmenistan by providing employment to its locals in the oil and gas industry.

"About 85% of positions in Turkmenistan are held by locals and Petronas has provided training

for 230 technicians; 150 scholarships have been given to the Turkmenistan people to participate in the oil and gas industry," he said.

Najib also said Turkmenistan was keen to study Malaysia's economic model, and he welcomed the country to send a technical team to Malaysia for "an in-depth study of our experience".

On the global economic situation, Najib said both of them had agreed that the two countries as well as the two regions of Central Asia and Asean should "collaborate even closer" to overcome "strong economic headwinds".

Berdimuhamedov said Petronas was "an impressive example" of a mutually beneficial bilateral partnership and he welcomed more Malaysian companies into Turkmenistan.

He also said at the joint press conference that both leaders affirmed their mutual desire to promote peace and stability in their own regions, and agreed to consolidate efforts to counter threats such as terrorism, extremism, transnational crimes and trafficking.

Upon his arrival yesterday, Berdimuhamedov was accorded a ceremonial welcome at the Perdana Square at the Prime Minister's Office.

This is Berdimuhamedov's second official visit to Malaysia, the first being in 2011.

The two leaders then held their meetings, and later witnessed the signing of a protocol amendment agreement on economic, scientific and technical cooperation, as well as a memorandum of understanding on sports development cooperation.