

Malaysia and Turkmenistan have many similarities, says Mahathir

ASHGABAT (Turkmenistan): The many similarities in policies and approaches that exist between Malaysia and Turkmenistan give an opportunity for both countries to work closely in many areas, says Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The Prime Minister said the cooperation could be enhanced through various ways, including holding business and product exhibitions in both countries.

"We hope to see an exhibition of Turkmenistan products and culture in Malaysia, and we also hope to have the same exhibition in Ashgabat next year," he said in a joint press statement at the end of meetings with Turkmenistan President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov at the Presidential Palace here yesterday.

Dr Mahathir said that relations between Malaysia and Turkmenistan were not strong because they knew little about each other as they belonged to different blocs in the past.

"But now we have the opportunity to meet each other and have long discussions with Mr President and it is quite obvious that we have many things in common as well as many things that we can exchange views or information to enhance the development of our country," he said.

"It is very significant when we have many similarities and at the same time exchange ideas and information to improve the country's progress."

Dr Mahathir noted that visits by top leaders were also important and he extended an invitation to Berdimuhamedov to visit Malaysia.

Berdimuhamedov had made official visits to Malaysia in December 2011 and November 2016.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir, who is on a two-day official visit, was accorded an official welcome at the Presidential Square where he was greeted on arrival by Berdimuhamedov.

After the national anthems of Malaysia and Turkmenistan were played, Dr Mahathir then inspected a guard-of-honour.

Dr Mahathir and Berdimuhamedov later held a restricted meeting followed by a bilateral meeting and a signing ceremony.

The exchange of notes on the Programme of Cooperation between the foreign ministries of both countries for 2020/2021 and the exchange of notes on Academic-Diplomatic Collaboration between both governments were also in the programme.

The Malaysian delegation includes Foreign Minister Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah and Economic Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Azmin Ali. — Bernama