

'Malaysia, Turkmenistan have many things in common'

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NST - 28/10/2019

ASHGABAT (Turkmenistan): The many similarities in policies and approaches between Malaysia and Turkmenistan give both countries an opportunity to work together, said Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Dr Mahathir said the cooperation could be boosted by holding business and products exhibitions in both countries.

"We hope to see an exhibition of Turkmenistan products and culture in Malaysia, and we also hope to have a similar 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 relations between Malaysia and Turk-

menistan were not strong because they did not know much 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, and it is obvious we have many things in common, as well as many things that we can exchange views or information.

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

Dr Mahathir said visits by leaders were important and he extended an invitation to Berdimuhamedov to visit Malaysia.

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



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Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad inspecting a guard of honour at the Presidential Square in Ashgabat yesterday. With him is Turkmenistan President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov.

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Dr Mahathir said Malaysia and Turkmenistan saw opportunities to play a role in international affairs, for example, through the Non-Aligned Movement where both countries had raised concerns about terrorism.

"During the NAM Summit, we see from the speeches made that Malaysia and Turkmenistan hold the same views. We are concerned about terrorism in the world and I had explained that there is a reason for terrorism... if

we identify the reason, maybe we can reduce terrorism and eliminate it.

"This is something that we find many of the powerful countries unwilling to do — to identify the reason and also to act to reduce terrorism. Military action alone will not end terrorism."

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

hamedov.

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

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

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