

PM concludes official visit to Saudi Arabia on high note

RIYADH: Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin has described his four-day official visit to Saudi Arabia as very successful.

"It's very successful," he said at the end of the visit on Tuesday.

Apart from taking Kuala Lumpur-Riyadh ties to new heights, the visit has also produced several positive outcomes for Malaysia.

Among the substantive matters achieved were Malaysia's success in securing an additional 10,000 places under its haj quota and the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding to ease and simplify the pre-clearance process for Malaysian haj and umrah pilgrims.

Other matters included the possibility of Saudi Arabia increasing its palm oil imports from 318,000 tonnes worth RM900mil last year to 500,000 tonnes in the near future.

Malaysia is the first country listed for the 'Mecca Road Service' initiative which will ease and simplify the pre-clearance process for Malaysian haj and umrah pilgrims.

"All we had before this was a mere pilot project. With the initiative, it will be a permanent feature," said a diplomat.

Both countries agreed to set up the Saudi-Malaysian Coordination Centre to pave the way for regular consultation and follow-up on matters of mutual interest and benefit.

"We are going to have a structured mechanism to be jointly headed by the foreign ministers of both countries," said Muhyiddin.

The Prime Minister, who arrived in this country on Saturday, landed in Mecca first to perform the umrah and was given the opportunity to enter the Kaabah.



Warm welcome: Muhyiddin and his wife Puan Sri Noorainee Abdul Rahman arriving at the Abu Dhabi International Airport in United Arab Emirates. He was greeted by UAE Cabinet minister Sheikh Shakhbout and Malaysia's Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein. — Bernama

He then flew to Madinah on Sunday to visit the Tomb of Prophet Muhammad and Nabawi Mosque.

He arrived in Riyadh on Tuesday.

The official visit, at the invitation of King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, was carried out under strict standard operating proce-

dures to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

Muhyiddin later arrived in Abu Dhabi at 11.50pm on Tuesday to begin his official visit to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the second leg of his Middle East visit.

He was scheduled to meet the

Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan later yesterday.

Muhyiddin will go to Dubai later to meet Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of

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Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin

Dubai Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum.

According to Wisma Putra, the visit will serve as a catalyst for resilience and growth, particularly in the areas of trade and investment, agriculture and food security, health and diplomatic exchanges.

UAE is Malaysia's largest trading partner in the Middle East. The UAE's status as an international trade and financial hub makes it an important partner for Malaysia to access new markets.

Malaysia is a critical gateway for UAE products and services in South-East Asia.

Discussions with UAE, among others, will focus on collaboration in the post-pandemic recovery phase, food security and strengthening cooperation in the oil and gas industry.

Muhyiddin will leave for home today. — Bernama