

**Malaysia-UAE Relations Strategic, Very Significant – Najib
Bernama
May 19, 2014
By Sh Nur Shahrizad Sy Mohamed Sharer**

ABU DHABI, May 19 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak ended his three-day visit to the United Arab Emirates, Monday, describing the Gulf state as a major strategic partner for Malaysia, with bilateral ties that were very significant.

"What has materialised and was announced in this visit is very significant, including joint ventures in defence, contributions to build the largest mosque complex and cooperation in other investment areas.

"This shows that the UAE is Malaysia's major strategic partner has significance that is very meaningful," he told Malaysian media before departing home for Kuala Lumpur.

Besides major breakthroughs in trade between the two countries, the Prime Minister's second official visit to the country has created a new platform for closer cooperation in various fields including tourism, education and defence.

Bilateral relations between the two countries was given a boost with the official visit.

Describing the official visit as "showing encouraging results", Najib said cooperation in defence and health tourism were among the new areas with potential to be developed and could be hugely profitable for both countries.

"We see the cooperation in defence no less important as there are many benefits to be had.

"Medical tourism is an aspect which can be emphasised as they (tourists from the Gulf states) when they travel, will bring along large families, and this will help increase the number of tourists to our country," he said.

Drawing attention to the joint military training exercise between Malaysia and UAE, Najib said it could contribute to the level of expertise and professionalism of Malaysia's armed forces.

The Prime Minister believed the diplomatic relations should be multi-dimensional even though it began with trade and economic ties.

Earlier in the day, the Prime Minister was given the honour of witnessing a special parade in conjunction with the joint military exercise between the armies of the two countries in Abu Dhabi.

The special parade was a manifestation of the close ties in defence between the two Islamic

countries.

Commenting on it, Najib who attended the event with Abu Dhabi Crown Prince, Sheikh Mohammed Zayed Al Nahyan and Malaysian Armed Forces Chief, Tan Sri Gen Zulkifeli Mohd Zin, said the parade mirrored the high professionalism between the UAE and Malaysian armies.

He said the joint exercise would be held from time to time to give exposure to the national defence team on military operations in various conditions.

However, details of the joint exercise were not revealed to the media.

The Prime Minister's three-day visit to Abu Dhabi witnessed two memoranda of understanding (MoU) and two agreements signed between Malaysia and Abu Dhabi.

The MoUs were to foster closer cooperation in the fields of tourism and education for the benefit both countries.

One of the agreements was between 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) and UAE's Islamic Affairs and Wakaf Authority is for the construction of a mosque complex in Malaysia which will symbolise the close ties between the two Islamic countries.

The agreement will also see the spread Islamic teachings with the establishment of a learning centre for gifted children within the complex, which will be built in Bandar Malaysia, a new township in Sungai Besi in Kuala Lumpur.

The other was a business venture between the Federal Land Development Authority (FELDA) and the largest supermarket chain in the Middle East, the Lulu International Group.

The joint venture would potentially be beneficial to Malaysia, offering 2,000 direct job opportunities as well as 5,000 indirect job opportunities through the opening of its branches in Malaysia.

For a start, the Lulu Group will open 10 halal hypermarkets in Malaysia, with each creating morehan 200 jobs at all levels.

-- BERNAMA

Copyright © 2014 BERNAMA

Source: <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v7/newsindex.php?id=1039499>