

## **Mahathir to visit Thailand tomorrow**

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PUTRAJAYA, Oct 23 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad will make a two-day official visit to Thailand starting tomorrow.

The Foreign Ministry (Wisma Putra), in a statement today, said it is part of his introductory visits to neighbouring Southeast Asian countries since having become the prime minister on May 10.

It said that during the visit, Dr Mahathir will meet Thailand Prime Minister General Prayut Chan-o-cha, and attend an official dinner.

Wisma Putra said the visit will provide an opportunity for the two leaders to further strengthen bilateral relations and cooperation between the two countries.

"It would also allow Malaysia to highlight the government's current policies and its stand, particularly on issues of mutual concern," it said.

Wisma Putra said the visit is also expected to add momentum to the southern Thailand peace dialogue process. The Malaysian government recently appointed former Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Mohd Noor as the new facilitator for the peace talks.

On economic cooperation, Wisma Putra said, Malaysia's total trade with Thailand in 2017 recorded a significant growth of 18.43 per cent to reach RM98.69 billion from RM86.46 billion in 2016.

Thailand is Malaysia's fifth largest trading partner and the second largest among the ASEAN

countries after Singapore.

From the Thai perspective, Malaysia is Thailand's largest trading partner among the ASEAN countries and the fourth largest among its trading partners in the world.

During the visit, Dr Mahathir will be accompanied by his wife, Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali; Foreign Minister Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah; International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Ignatius Darell Leiking and senior government officials.

Wisma Putra said Dr Mahathir is also scheduled to meet the Malaysian diaspora in Thailand.

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