

Many areas for M'sia -Pakistan to explore - Dr Mahathir

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From Kamarul Ariffin Md Yassin

ISLAMABAD, March 23 (Bernama) -- There are many areas of cooperation that Pakistan and Malaysia can explore, which will be able to bring about benefits to both countries, said Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"There are many fields ... but (before this), we did not know of their capabilities and they did not know of our capabilities. Only when we are here, can we see their strengths.

"If they can make military vehicles, I think (doing) the others will not be hard for them. If they can accept the proposal to make our cars with us, I think it's good. Their population is 210 million, we are 32 million. If we (with a population of 32 million) can make (our own) cars, they can do a lot more.

"In the field of engineering, research, trade, agriculture, ... (there are) many things where we can work with them. We can buy from them and sell to them," he told the Malaysian media at the Pakistan Air Force Base, Nur Khan Rawalpindi, near here, on Saturday.

Earlier, the Prime Minister who is on a three-day working visit to Pakistan since Thursday, became the guest of honor at the Pakistan Day celebration held at the Shakar Parian parade area here.

Dr Mahathir said there was now greater understanding between Pakistan and Malaysia and if both countries really worked on it, they could improve trade and bilateral ties.

“ As you can see they have been able to build aircraft (JF-17 Thunder). The aircraft demonstrated just now (during the Pakistan Day parade) performed very well. I know Pakistan would like to sell their planes to us. Everybody wants to sell planes to us. Give us one or two planes so that we can see (gauge them).

“(Besides that) some of the vessels, land vehicles were built by them. I don’t know how strong the Pakistani army is, and (if) those missiles can carry nuclear warheads, people will think twice about attacking Pakistan,” he said.

Asked on his discussions with Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan on his efforts to fight corruption, Dr Mahathir said both nations were facing the same problems in getting “people from the past (government) who are corrupt” to the court.

“ They (Pakistan) want to take action against people from the past (government) who are corrupt but they find it difficult to get hearings in the court. They have a problem with that. We too have a problem because it looks like the courts have their own ideas about how serious this matter (is). As a result we have not made much progress. We have taken cases to the courts but there are no trials,” he said.

Dr Mahathir arrived here on Thursday for a three-day official visit to the country.

On Friday morning, he was was accorded an official welcome at the Prime Minister’s residence where he was received by Imran, followed by a meeting between the two leaders.

They later attended a meeting with both the Malaysian and Pakistani delegation.

Both prime ministers later attended a round-table meeting with captains of Industry from Malaysia and Pakistan at a hotel here.

The leaders then officiated the symbolic groundbreaking ceremony for the Malaysian

national carmaker Proton's manufacturing assembly plant in the country.

They also witnessed the signing of agreements/memorandums of understanding between Malaysian and Pakistani companies.

On the same day, Dr Mahathir was conferred the *Nishan-e-Pakistan* or Order of Pakistan, the country's highest civilian award, by Pakistan President Dr Arif Alivi at the Aiwan-e-Sadr Presidential Palace.

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