

Maintain goodwill in Middle East, firms told

MUSTAPHA KAMIL

Reporting from
ABU DHABI



PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's visit to the United Arab Emirates has paved the way for materialisation of several planned initiatives between both states, following their increasingly stronger ties with Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince Gen Sheikh Mohammad Zayed Al Nahyan, confirming his intention to visit Malaysia this year.

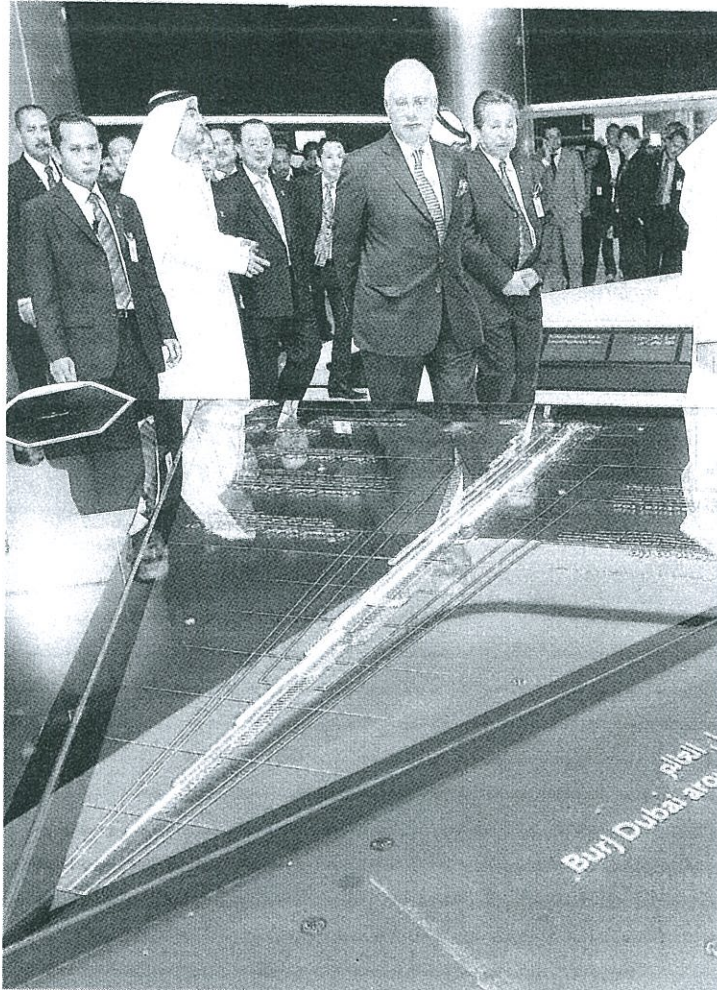
In his meeting with Najib on Monday, Sheikh Mohammad told Najib that he had instructed state-owned investment company Mubadala to identify several new investment opportunities, especially in the hospitality industry in Malaysia.

Wrapping up his three-day official visit to the UAE, Najib said he was also presented with many new opportunities Malaysian companies can explore in the state, as in the up-and-coming Western Region of Abu Dhabi, whose ruler, Sheikh Hamdan Zayed Al Nahyan, also indicated interest in visiting Malaysia.

In his audience with Sheikh Mohammad Rashid A Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE, and Ruler of Dubai, Najib expressed Malaysia's gratitude for the opportunities given to Malaysian companies in many iconic and high-value projects there.

He also hoped that a Malaysian company offering to provide maintenance work on the world's tallest building, the Burj Khalifa in Dubai, would be successful in its bid.

The company's bid is being backed by its experience in maintaining the Petronas Twin Towers



Datuk Seri Najib Razak looking at a model of the Burj Khalifa in Dubai on Monday. With him is Foreign Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Anifah Aman (right). — Bernama picture

in Kuala Lumpur.

Najib was also informed earlier during his visit that Mubadala's green technology company, Masdar, will jointly explore the possibility of building a carbon-neutral city in Abu Dhabi with 1Malaysia Development Bhd before replicating a similar project on a smaller scale in Malaysia.

"Hopefully by the time the Crown Prince visits Malaysia, we

will have finalised certain things on the project in Malaysia."

The prime minister was pleased with the success recorded by Malaysian companies currently operating in the Emirates, saying that their involvement in the region exemplifies the 1Malaysia concept where everyone is given equal opportunity to excel.

In his speech at the 1Malaysia dinner on Monday night, Najib

said what the companies were doing showed the readiness of Malaysians to venture out from their traditional playing fields.

Several Malaysian companies are involved in many key infrastructure and high-profile construction projects in the Middle East, and Najib said their successes were due in part to the strong bilateral relations built between Kuala Lumpur and governments in the region.

He said some of the projects in this region were mind-boggling, including the Burj Khalifa which he toured on Monday.

The building was built with the involvement of a Malaysian steel fabrication company.

"One of the reasons why I am making this visit is to further strengthen our relations."

He added that especially in the Middle East, goodwill built on trust between two governments was vital since many important decisions in the region were made by the top echelons in the government.

He urged the companies operating here to work closely with the Malaysian government to strengthen the goodwill enjoyed by Malaysia among states in the region.

He also reminded them to play their part in showcasing the Malaysian brand by setting the highest standards in their work.

"We must look beyond just winning contracts for our own companies. We must build the Malaysian brand."

He reminded the companies to honour their promises and deliver quality work on time.

Najib also called on Malaysians to think big and be more outward-looking in embracing changes to stand a chance in the competitive global environment.

He noted the emergence of such traits among the Gulf economies, saying it was one important lesson he learned from his visit, where the people have become more outward-looking and were thinking of the big picture.

"Being petty will not take any country anywhere in the changing and competitive global landscape.

"Even the once inward-looking Saudi Arabia has begun to attract the best brains."

The prime minister said Malaysians should adopt a similar attitude.

"If we do not change our mindset, we will never become a 21st century nation."

SHARING VIEWS

The prime minister's wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, exchanging ideas with Princess Mashael Turki Al-Faisal (left) from the King Faisal Centre for Research and Islamic Studies when they met at a luncheon hosted by the King Faisal Foundation in Abu Dhabi on Monday. Also present was

