

Mahathir's visit: Pakistan, Malaysia may sign various MoUs, business deals

Pakistan and Malaysia are expected to sign memoranda of understanding (MoUs) and business deals on the eve of Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad's visit to the country who will be the guest of honour on Pakistan Day's parade on March 23. Diplomatic sources told Business Recorder that Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad will visit Pakistan from March 22-23 along with a high-level delegation including cabinet ministers, businessmen and investors.

During his stay in Islamabad, the sources said that the Malaysian Prime Minister will hold delegation level talks at the Prime Minister's House with Prime Minister Imran Khan followed by a one-on-one meeting between the two premiers. They said that the two sides are expected to sign various MoUs and business deals aimed at deepening economic cooperation between the two countries and providing investment opportunities to Malaysian companies in different sectors.

The two sides are also likely to announce cooperation in eradicating corruption and strengthening institutions.

Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad will be visiting Pakistan at the invitation of Prime Minister Imran Khan who during his visit to Malaysia in November last year had extended an invitation to his Malaysian counterpart to visit Pakistan.

According to Director General, Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Gen Asif Ghafoor, the Malaysian Prime Minister will be the guest of honour in Pakistan Day parade which will also be attended by Defence Minister of Azerbaijan, Chief of Army Staff of Bahrain and government officials from Oman and contingents of various regional countries would participate in the "PakDayParade. Prime Minister Malaysia Dr Mahathir bin Mohamad will be the guest of honour. Guests include Defence Minister Azerbaijan, CoAS Bahrain and government officials from Oman. Various contingents from Azerbaijan, Bahrain, China, KSA, Sri Lanka & Turkey will participate in Parade", Gen Ghafoor said in a tweet.

This year Pakistan Day's parade comes following tension with India when Pakistan shot down two Indian jets on February 27 and captured one pilot who was later released on March 1 as 'peace gesture'.

According to a senior diplomat, unlike India which has a tradition of inviting foreign dignitaries to its Republic Day celebrations every year, there was no such precedent until last year when Pakistan invited Sri Lankan President Maithrepala Sirisena to attend the Pakistan Day celebrations on March 23 as chief guest.

And last year was the first time Pakistan invited Indian defence attaché and senior diplomats of the Indian High Commission to witness the Pakistan Day parade. Sources added that last year was the first time military contingents from China, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Turkey and Jordan participated in the Pakistan Day parade.

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