

# Reforms bode well for trade

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*Business Trip*

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HARARE: Zimbabwe's Government reforms will be a plus factor in the country's efforts to attract business, especially from Malaysia, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He expressed confidence that Zimbabwe would continue to offer attractive incentives to Malaysian investors who, he said, were actively seeking market niches the world over.

"The opportunities for greater economic interaction between Malaysia and Zimbabwe exist," he said at a state banquet hosted by Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe last night.

Dr Mahathir arrived here yesterday at the head of a 15-member delegation for a four-day official visit.

Among those accompanying him are his wife Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz, and Foreign Ministry deputy secretary-general (I) Datuk Abdul Halim Ali.

Dr Mahathir said the Malaysian economy, which was fast expanding, offered a good market for export and source of supply for Zimbabwe's expansion as a result of buoyant economic conditions.

"The area's foremost regional organisation —

Asean — is also making strides towards the realisation of the Asean Free Trade Area (Afta) which will further enhance economic development of its member states."

He said with the signing of bilateral agreements on avoidance of double taxation, investment guarantee and air services would also set the tone for greater co-operation.

While these agreements serve as a framework for co-operation, he said, the real impetus to more intensive and meaningful relations must come from the private sectors of the two countries.

"There are opportunities for investments and joint ventures in areas such as construction, building materials, transport, mining, tourism, pharmaceutical and energy," Dr Mahathir said.

"Malaysia is firmly committed to enhance its economic and trading ties with Zimbabwe and is equally serious in wanting to share technical expertise with each other," he said.

"Malaysia, like Zimbabwe, is a fervent supporter of the UN in its role to maintain international peace and security."

However, he said the process of international relations and the institution's democratisation must not stop short of restructuring the Security Council to reflect the changing circumstances of the world.