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AUSSIE FOREIGN MINISTER ON FIRST VISIT TO MALAYSIA

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 6 (Bernama) -- Australian Foreign Affairs Minister Alexander Downer is arriving here tomorrow for a four-day visit, his first since the Liberal Coalition Party won the March elections.

The Liberal Coalition Party is said to be looking to improve Australia's somewhat strained relationship with Malaysia left by the previous Labour government.

The programme for his first day here includes calls on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi at whose invitation Downer is making the visit, according to a Wisma Putra statement here.

On the second day, Downer is scheduled to meet Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz, Entrepreneur Development Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed and Education Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

He is also scheduled to give a lecture on "Malaysia-Australia Relations Into the 21st Century: Shared Interests, Opportunities for Common Action," at the Institute for Diplomacy and Foreign Relations.

He will call on Defence Minister Datuk Syed Hamid Albar and Economic Advisor to the government Tun Daim Zainuddin before visiting the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology in Jawi and meeting Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon.

Downer, who is expected to be accompanied by three Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade senior officials, is scheduled to leave for Adelaide on Aug 10. -- BERNAMA

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