

07 AUG 1996

Downer-Mahathir

AUSSIE FOREIGN MINISTER MEETS PM

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 7 (Bernama) -- Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downe met Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad here today and discussed, among other things, the growing relations between Australia and Malaysia.

"We talked a lot about where we have common interest, about bilateral relationship and how it is growing and also the trading opportunities that Australia has in Malaysia," Downer told reporters after the 20-minute meeting.

He said the meeting was "to get together and just to help develop the personal relationship which is so important to the bilateral relationship".

He said discussions also touched on Australian engagement in the region, particularly in the context of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation and the upcoming Apec summit meeting in Manila in November.

Downer arrived here this morning to begin a four-day visit to Malaysia.

Downer said he told Dr Mahathir that Australia was looking forward not only to expanding its export of traditional agricultural and mining commodities but also in other areas.

"Dr Mahathir made the point that he was particularly impressed with the Australian building industry and the technology it was able to bring to Malaysia," he said.

Downer said they also discussed multilateral trade issues.

Asked whether they touched on the Malaysia-proposed East Asia Economic Caucus, he said the subject was not brought up.

Downer will meet his Malaysian counterpart, Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi this afternoon.

He is also scheduled to call on Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz, Education Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, Defence Minister Datuk Syed Hamid Albar and Entrepreneur Development Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed.

Downer will also visit Pulau Pinang. -- BERNAMA

MAM JK