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Agong-Banquet

MALAYSIA WILLING TO SHARE EXPERIENCES WITH KAZAKHSTAN

KUALA LUMPUR, May 27 (Bernama) -- Malaysia is prepared to share her experiences with Kazakhstan, especially in areas that might be useful and relevant, such as the development of free trade zones, privatisation, economic planning and the management of inter-ethnic relations.

"This sharing of experiences can constitute an important and practical linkage in our bilateral relations," Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Ja'afar said at a state banquet in honour of President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan at Parliament House here tonight.

The King said as Malaysia strove towards developed nation status by the year 2020, she had over the years acquired considerable knowledge and expertise in diverse fields of economics and development.

On the other hand, Malaysia was confident that Kazakhstan, with her vast natural resources, would offer interesting opportunities for Malaysian businessmen to cooperate with their Kazakhstan counterparts in mutually beneficial trade and other economic undertakings, he said.

As a developing country that had been quite successful in bringing development and progress to its people since independence in 1957, Malaysia was aware of the immense challenges faced by the newly independent Kazakhstan in its efforts towards nation building in a multi-ethnic environment, his Majesty added.

"We are also aware that under your dynamic leadership, Kazakhstan has embarked upon courageous and bold steps towards political and economic reforms and has begun to expand cooperation at the regional and international levels," he said.

"On the regional level, Malaysia sees the benefit of regional cooperation in Central Asia and the possibility of the development of closer cooperation between Asean and the Central Asian region."

He said Malaysia and Kazakhstan had enjoyed cordial and friendly relations since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Kazakhstan is the first and only Central Asian country to establish an embassy here.

The King said although the relationship was relatively new, active interaction had been initiated between peoples of the two countries, both at official as well as private sector levels.

"Your visit to Malaysia will enable us to explore further the avenues for further cooperation between Malaysia and Kazakhstan, and your diplomatic presence here has contributed towards increased awareness about Kazakhstan, including its culture and people amongst Malaysians. It has also helped in fostering closer economic and political links between our two countries," the King said.

Tuanku Ja'afar was happy to note that the two governments had signed a number of bilateral economic agreements which would provide the legal framework for the intensification of trade and economic relations between Malaysia and Kazakhstan.

He said the presence of a number of prominent businessmen in the president's delegation would certainly facilitate the establishment of direct contacts between the private sectors of both countries.

In his reply, President Nazarbayev said Kazakhstan had a great respect for Malaysia's foreign policy which played a key role in the development of a positive political and economic process currently underway in the Asia Pacific region.

"We are proud to note that Malaysian leaders command a high authority in the world arena," he said.

Nazarbayev said Kazakhstan, with its unique place in the existing geopolitical reality as a bridge between Asia and Europe, was prepared to build a political, economic and humanitarian relationship with Malaysia.

He said this relationship should serve to the full extent the cause of peace and stability on the Asian continent.

"I am convinced that the results of this trip will immediately activate our partnership by giving it a dynamic and lively character. The joint declaration that we have made as well as the agreements on the development of trade, economic, scientific and technological cooperation and protection of investment, indicate the willingness of our countries to engage in a dialogue based on a solid legal foundation," he said.

Nazarbayev said his country was currently undergoing the same process of development that Malaysia went through in its own time with economic changes underway, new technologies being developed and a conducive investment climate being created.

"This is why Malaysia's experience in the economic reform is especially valuable for us. This is the experience that enabled Malaysia to make great strides in the development of its economy and in increasing the prosperity of its people, and eventually enabled Malaysia to become a regional leader," he said.

Also present were the president's wife, Sara A.Nazarbayeva, Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Najihah, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali. -- BERNAMA

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