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Malta-Visit

MALTA OFFERS FREE-PORT SERVICES TO LOCAL EXPORTERS

KUALA LUMPUR, May 23 (Bernama) -- Malta is offering its free port as a distribution centre for Malaysian goods to the European market, its Finance Minister, John Dalli, said today.

He said Malaysian exporters would benefit from utilising the Maltese port which offered cost-effective operations and better facilities.

"Today, Malaysian exporters are using Rotterdam as their distribution centre," he told reporters after calling on Finance Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim at his office, here.

Dalli, who is here on a one-day visit, later had lunch with Anwar and the ministry's officers.

"The reason of the visit is to make my own appraisal on the development of Malaysia and to find ways for cooperation between both countries," he said.

Dalli said another area of cooperation which Malta was looking into with Malaysia was manufacture of port equipment and facilities such as cranes.

He said Malta presently exported port cranes to Britain and the Bahamas and was looking forward to developing joint ventures with Malaysian companies to supply the equipment in the region.

"With the development in the Malaysian port sector, there is a big market in crane production to generate in the region," he added.

Dalli described the present volume of trade between Malta and Malaysia as "very low, as Malta is a small country". He added that with the cooperation with Malaysia, Maltese businessmen could benefit by having a better entry-point to the Asian market.

He said the half-hour meeting with Anwar focussed on ideas to start the cooperation.

"It is very well received...naturally the ideas and implementations need to be studied thoroughly," he added.

The republic of Malta, which consists of Malta, Gozo, Comino and two uninhabited islands, is situated in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea.

The national language is the Maltese language, but both Maltese and English are the official languages.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was in Malta last April to deliver a keynote address at the Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management's second biennial conference. -- BERNAMA

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