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Myanmar-Asean

MYANMAR COMMITTED TO CLOSER COOPERATION WITH ASEAN

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 12 (Bernama) -- The Chairman of Myanmar's State Law And Order Restoration Council (SLORC), Senior General Than Shwe, said his country is committed to closer cooperation with Asean and the countries of this region.

He said with Myanmar's attainment of observer status in Asean last month, all the 10 Southeast Asian nations have reaffirmed their commitment to the concept of one Southeast Asia.

"We are confident that with this growing solidarity, our region will be able to play an increasing important role for world peace, security and prosperity," he said at a state banquet held in Istana Negara in honour of his visit to Malaysia.

Present at the banquet were Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Ja'afar, Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Najihah, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamed and his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah.

General Than Shwe said that as Myanmar changes its economic system by introducing market economy with a wider opening of the private sector, there exists a great variety of business opportunities for local and foreign investors.

"I believe that with the expertise and technology from Malaysia, supplemented by the presence of natural resources in Myanmar, these opportunities could be exploited to the mutual benefits of our two countries and peoples," he added.

He also said that the problem of insurgency faced by the nation since regaining independence, which was the cause for the country lagging behind in economy, has virtually come to a cease with the return to the legal fold by 16 armed groups.

The economy recorded an average growth of 8.2 percent during the last four years, bringing better quality of life for the people, said General Than Shwe.

"While opening the country to the outside world, measures are also being taken to ensure the preservation and promotion of our rich culture, heritage and national identity," he said. -- BERNAMA

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