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Agong-Sweden

TRADE BETWEEN M'SIA AND SWEDEN CAN BE EXPANDED, SAYS TUANKU JA'AFAR

KUALA LUMPUR, March 12 (Bernama) -- The Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Ja'afar said tonight Sweden was Malaysia's largest trading partner among the Nordic countries but there was still room to enhance trade between the two nations.

"Although our trade is small, there is excellent scope for expansion, he said at a State banquet in honour of King Carl Gustaf and Queen Silvia of Sweden at Parliament House, here.

The Yang di-Pertuan Agong said Swedish captains of industry could form strategic partnership with their Malaysian counterparts to jointly tap the abundant economic potential in Southeast Asia and the Asia Pacific regions.

Tuanku Ja'afar said relations between Malaysia and Sweden had intensified over the years, especially with the establishment of the Malaysian embassy in Stockholm in 1986.

Despite the distance, he said Sweden was no stranger to Malaysia with Swedish goods making their presence felt in many Malaysian households.

"We hope that in time, Malaysian national products and exports can make a similar impact on Swedish lifestyle," said Tuanku Ja'afar.

He said Malaysia benefited tremendously from Sweden's technical assistance and training programmes ranging from land administration to telecommunication and machine operation.

Tuanku Ja'afar also said the appointment of former Swedish Prime Minister Carl Bildt as the European Union mediator and subsequently High Representative for peace implementation in Bosnia Herzegovina was an eloquent testimony of international confidence in the Swedish skills of mediation.

"As another small country desirous of playing a constructive role regionally and internationally, Malaysia is indeed encouraged by Sweden's quiet yet effective diplomacy," he added.

The Swedish royal couple arrived here today to begin a five-day visit to Malaysia.

In his speech, King Gustaf said co-operation between his country and Malaysia already covered many areas, especially trade which constituted an important part in bilateral relations.

He said businessmen from the two countries should work closely together and help in the transfer of technology between the two sides.

As the two countries depended on foreign investment for continued growth, it was in the interest of both sides to support the World Trade Organisation and liberal trade policy, he said.

King Gustaf commended Malaysia for playing an active role internationally through its substantial contribution to the United Nations and its efforts to help make the recent Asia-Europe Meeting in Bangkok a success.

The grand banquet was also graced by Her Majesty the Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Najihah, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali. -- BERNAMA

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