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Mahathir-Turkey

TURKISH PRIVATE SECTOR INVITED TO USE M'SIA TO ENTER ASIAN MARKET

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 17 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad tonight invited the private sector in Turkey to use Malaysia as a stepping stone to enter the big and thriving Southeast Asian market.

At the same time the Malaysian private sector could explore Turkey's unique position as the entry point to Europe and West Asia as well as establish partnerships to exploit this uniqueness for mutual benefit, he said.

He believed that the Malaysian private sector would seize the opportunity to establish ties that would further strengthen the economy and trade between the two countries.

"Although cooperation between the two countries covers various fields, I believe we can do more to achieve the full potential of our relations," he said at a dinner in honour of Turkish Prime Minister Dr Necmettin Erbakan at Sri Perdana, here.

Dr Erbakan arrived here yesterday for a three-day visit.

Dr Mahathir said the trade figures between Malaysia and Turkey, which were very small for two nations that were so close, clearly showed the situation.

He said Malaysia-Turkey bilateral relations were always good.

"We have nurtured friendly ties among the Muslims in our countries. The Muslim world owes a lot to Turkey for preserving the glory of the Islamic heritage," he said.

He added that as part of the Muslim world, Kuala Lumpur and Ankara could share in many things for mutual benefit.

Dr Mahathir said one aspiration they shared was the achievement of a high economic development.

He said Malaysia believed that countries should cooperate and share experience and consolidate expertise.

Malaysia was prepared to share its experiences with Turkey, he added.

The prime minister said cooperation between the two countries also covered international issues in the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) and the United Nations.

For example, he said, Malaysia and Turkey had cooperated in the OIC and at other international fora to pressure the international community to ensure that the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina were given their sovereign rights.

Dr Mahathir also reiterated Malaysia's stand that Israel should not impose new conditions that could obstruct the peace process in West Asia.

Malaysia, he said, took a serious view of the hardline stand adopted by the Israeli prime minister in the peace process.

"Delays in holding negotiations with the Palestinians, rejection of the land principle for peace and attempts to establish new realities through the opening of areas for Jewish residents will increase the tension and renew confrontation," he said.

Dr Erbakan, in his speech, said Turkey hoped to expand its relations with Malaysia and extend it to new areas of cooperation.

"We are determined to take every step in this direction," he said.

He said Turkey's basic aim was to bring relations between the two Muslim countries to a level which would set a good example to other Islamic nations.

Dr Erbakan also praised Malaysia for its achievements on the

international political and economic scene.

"The close and meaningful cooperation demonstrated by Turkey and Malaysia to alleviate the plight of the Bosnian people set an example to all peace-loving countries," he said.

Dr Erbakan also said that as a result of the measures taken to liberalise the Turkish economy, its national income had increased significantly with the private sector becoming the engine of its economic growth.

The visiting premier said that while contributing to reducing tensions in its often turbulent region, Turkey at the same time encouraged the propagation of democracy and the rule of law in the area. -- BERNAMA

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