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Uruguay-Proton

URUGUAY INVITES PROTON TO SET UP PLANT

KUALA LUMPUR, July 3 (Bernama) -- Uruguay has invited Malaysia to set up plants there for assembling or manufacturing cars for export to countries in the region.

Foreign Ministry Deputy Secretary-General Datuk Abdul Halim Ali said today that since Uruguay did not have its own automobile industry, it felt that Perusahaan Otomobil Nasional (Proton) could use it as a base to export to Brazil and Argentina.

As a member of the Mercosur economic cooperation, which also includes Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay, Uruguay has the trade facilities and export quota in several areas like automobile industry to move into these countries.

"This is certainly a very attractive offer and it will be conveyed to Proton," Abdul Halim told reporters after a meeting between Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Uruguayan President Dr Julio Maria Sanguinetti at the Prime Minister's Department here.

This is among several fields that have been identified for Malaysian investors to venture into in Uruguay, apart from infrastructure development like building of roads, bridges, ports and tourism facilities.

Sanguinetti arrived yesterday for a five-day visit at the invitation of Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Ja'afar to strengthen bilateral ties in line with South-South cooperation.

Halim said Dr Mahathir and Sanguinetti also exchanged views on developments in their respective regions.

While Uruguay said it could be a gateway into the Mercosur market for Malaysian goods, Malaysia made known its potential as a base for Uruguay's products to penetrate the Asean countries.

"We feel the volume of trade between Malaysia dan Uruguay is still small and can be increased," he said.

After the talks, Dr Mahathir and Sanguinetti witnessed the signing of an agreement and two memorandums of understanding (MOUs) between both countries.

Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Haji Ahmad Badawi and his Uruguayan counterpart Alvaro Ramos signed the agreement on economic, scientific and technical cooperation.

Ramos and Agriculture Minister Datuk Amar Dr Sulaiman Daud signed two MOUs

-- one on cooperation in veterinary medicine and the other on cooperation in sanitary and phytosanitary measures. -- BERNAMA

AZZ YBY