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Mahathir-Blair

BLAIR WANTS BETTER TIES WITH MALAYSIA

By: Azman Ujang

LONDON, May 20 (Bernama) -- New British Prime Minister Tony Blair wants better ties between his country and Malaysia, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said here today.

"He not only wants to see the existing good relations maintained but also wants to enhance further bilateral ties," Dr Mahathir told Malaysian journalists after a 30-minute meeting with Blair at 10 Downing Street here.

Dr Mahathir is the first head of government from Asia to call on Blair at the Prime Minister's office since he came to power in the May 1 general election.

He said they also discussed the situation in Asia, especially in East Asia.

"We also talked about the economy, mainly in general terms and nothing specific," said Dr Mahathir, who arrived here yesterday for a five-day visit to promote Malaysia's Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC).

Dr Mahathir was accompanied to the meeting by Malaysian High Commissioner to Britain Datuk Kamaruddin Abu.

Kuala Lumpur-London ties hit a low ebb in 1994 when the Malaysian government banned British companies from getting government contracts in retaliation to allegations by a British newspaper of kickbacks paid to certain Malaysian officials in a dam project built by a British company in Malaysia.

The ban was lifted soon after with Britain always remaining one of the top foreign investors in Malaysia.

Dr Mahathir earlier opened his MSC "road-show" at the Imperial College here which was attended by over 1,000 top executives of information technology companies from several European countries.

MSC is the hub for multinational IT corporations to locate their worldwide research and development, manufacturing and trading activities using multimedia.

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