

04 FEB 1997

BUSINESS INTEREST IN MALAYSIA INCREASES

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 4 (Bernama) -- The government's focused efforts in information technology (IT), education, high-tech manufacturing and tourism sectors has led to a tremendous upsurge in increasing business interest in the country.

Managing director of Frank Small & Associates (M) Sdn Bhd, Iain Bell, said that the nine consecutive years of upbeat economic growth had also set companies to examine closely the existing and potential demand for consumer goods and how they could be part of the boom cycle.

"Malaysia is high on their shopping list," he said in reference to the companies' heightened interest in investment and business opportunities in the country.

Bell said in a statement today that in view of this, foreign companies were investing a lot in market research to know the local marketing environment better.

As such, he said there has been substantial interest since the government announced its commitment to the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) in Putrajaya, the government's new administrative centre.

The interest has further gained momentum following the recent promotional visit of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to the United States and Japan, recently, he added.

"Many IT companies want to find out how the MSC will work for them and how they will benefit from having a presence in the MSC," Bell said.

Bell believed that Malaysia was well-placed to tap foreign investments because the cost of doing business in the country was still relatively competitive.

Besides the available pool of easily-trained local labour, he said the government has also relaxed its rules on the intake of skilled foreign labour.

In addition, he said shortage of skilled labour for certain industries has been overcome with the shift from labour intensive industries to the automation as well as reforming the education system to produce skilled labour.

Frank Small Associates, one of the leading marketing and research consultancies in Malaysia, is part of SOFRES International with offices in Australia, China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Indonesia, India, the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam. -- BERNAMA

ZMY FR