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Conference on Malaysia-British partnership

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will open a conference on Malaysia-British Partnership: The London Dialogue on Oct 21 in London.

After delivering the keynote address titled "Translating Vision into Reality: The Malaysian Experience" Dr Mahathir will have a dialogue with conference delegates.

The one-day dialogue is being organised by the Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute and about 300 delegates, a third of them Malaysians, are expected to attend the conference at the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia continues to welcome foreign investors who will find a business-friendly Government, a market-driven economy, a pro-active private sector and buoyant optimism.

"Despite recent turmoil in the financial markets, Malaysia remains an attractive investment destination. The Malaysian Government has taken bold steps to overcome the currency and stock market crisis," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the Government is pragmatic and has instituted remedial measures to reduce expenditure, defer big projects, reduce costs and boost productivity so that economic progress can be continued.

"For the first half of this year, we have achieved 8.7 per cent growth. Whilst we may slow down slightly next year, I am confident that we can still achieve moderately high growth with low inflation.

"We shall continue with our privatisation programmes as well as deregulation and liberalisation," the Prime Minister said, adding that the Government is responsive to the views of the business community, including genuine foreign investors.

He said the dialogue is timely as it will facilitate open and frank discussions on important bilateral issues and enable British businessmen, fund managers and institutional investors to obtain first hand information on the current status of the Malaysian economy.

Asli president Mirzan Mahathir said Education Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak and Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi will deliver the opening and closing addresses, respectively.

Also present were Terry Byrne, acting British High Commissioner and sponsors of the conference who were there to sign agreements with Asli.

Byrne said British Prime Minister Tony Blair in his message said that the dialogue builds upon strong foundations for Britain and Malaysia to work well together.

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