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HK wants to boost ties with us

HONG Kong wants to strengthen its trade relation with Malaysia which has grown at 25 per cent annually over the past five years.

The Chief Executive of the Special Administrative Region, Mr Tung Chee-Hwa, said Hong Kong has an important relationship with Malaysia which it wants to strengthen.

This also applies to the Association of South-East Asian Nations (Asean) whose trade with Hong Kong has grown by 21 per cent a year over the same period.

"Malaysia takes over the chair of Asean this year. For this reason it is appropriate to make Malaysia the first stop of my overseas trip," he told reporters after calling on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his deputy Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim at the Prime Minister's Department yesterday.

Tung, who is leading a 13-member delegation, arrived in Kuala Lumpur yesterday afternoon for a two-day visit.

On his meetings with Dr Mahathir and Anwar, he said "it was a very useful discussion," during which he briefed the Prime Minister on the transition of Hong Kong since the return to Chinese rule on July 1.

"It (transition) has been smooth and all the three branches of the Government in Hong Kong - the executive, legislature and the judiciary - are working very well and we are moving forward with pride and confidence," he added.

On the currency turmoil, Tung said: "Malaysia is a victim and I expect it to overcome the temporary setback soon. This is because it has strong economic fundamentals.

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