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INDIAN TRADE CHIEF SAYS M'SIAN ECONOMIC MIGHT WILL OVERCOME PROBLEMS

By: Mohd Haikal Mohd Isa

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 4 (Bernama) -- Malaysia's economic might will weather the current regional financial storm and pull through the crisis successfully, said N. Kumar, President of the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII), today.

Saying that India's business community has an unshakeable confidence that Malaysia would pull through, Kumar, who is also the vice-chairman of Sanmar Group, added that the region's financial woes experienced by East Asian countries are a temporary phenomenon.

"The strength of the Malaysian economy will take it on (the current financial problems)," he said after leading an Indian business delegation for a meeting with Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu at his ministry.

South East Asian countries have been rocked by currency crisis which had forced currencies in the region to depreciate and their stock markets to tumble. The contagion effects also sent shockwaves to the stock markets of Hong Kong, the United States and Europe.

Kumar said the current problems plaguing nation's financial sector would not hamper the already good business partnership existing between India and Malaysia but would instead spur future partnerships.

The growing partnership between Malaysia and India in the construction of ports, roads and highways was testimony to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's recent call for greater cooperation between both countries when he visited India recently, he said.

"Apart from the small and medium scale industries working on Information Technology and automotive components, a lot of partnerships between both countries will come up," said Kumar.

Malaysia's tremendous progress in equipping itself with modern infrastructure was something which the Indian business community could emulate to "climb the prosperity ladder," he said, adding that India has a lot to learn from Malaysia in the infrastructure sector.

Asked why India's information technology (IT) companies were slow to participate in Malaysia's Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) projects, Kumar said participation would pick up as the MSC became a reality.

India's IT and software-related companies were very good and technologically advanced, he said. Last year, they exported a total of US\$1.3 billion worth of products. -- BERNAMA

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