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Abdullah-Macedonia

M'SIA AND MACEDONIA SIGN TWO PACTS

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 11 (Bernama) -- Malaysia and Macedonia today signed two agreements on trade and investment guarantee to expand bilateral trade, economic and industrial cooperation.

The trade agreement was signed by International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz and the Macedonian minister for economy Boris Rikalovski.

She also signed the investment guarantee agreement with the Macedonian foreign minister Dr Blagoj Handziski.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Macedonian President Kiro Gligorov witnessed the signing at the Prime Minister's Department here.

Both leaders also held an hour-long talk there on various bilateral political, economic and trade issues.

Gligorov, who is leading a 46-member delegation of ministers, senior government officials and businessmen, arrived here yesterday for a four-day visit.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi briefed reporters later that today's Malaysia-Macedonia talks were fruitful in terms of reinforcing bilateral ties and identifying new areas of cooperation.

Gligorov has invited Malaysian businessmen to invest in his country and trade as well set up joint ventures with Macedonian companies, according to Abdullah.

"Gligorov identifies the communications, transport and infrastructural construction sectors as especially those looking forward to having Malaysian participation," Abdullah said.

Abdullah said Malaysia and Macedonia would also ask their respective national airlines to establish links to facilitate greater contact.

Gligorov also requested secondment of a Malaysian official to his country to help in matters related to development and investment promotion, Abdullah said.

"We're informed that a Matrade officer has been identified for secondment," he said.

Dr Mahathir and Gligorov also concurred that tourism was another area in which Malaysia and Macedonia could collaborate, said Abdullah.

Gligorov also briefed Dr Mahathir on the latest developments in the Balkan region including Macedonia's efforts towards establishing ties with neighbours especially states of the former Yugoslavia.

"Gligorov also spoke of the creation of the a regional free trade zone to serve businessmen including foreigners," Abdullah said.

Meanwhile, the International Trade and Industry Ministry said with the signing of the two agreements with Macedonia today, Malaysia had so far signed 53 trade and 57 investment guarantee agreements.

It said in a statement that total trade between Malaysia and Macedonia last year stood at RM237,000.

Malaysia exported mainly apparel and clothing totalling RM27,000 to Macedonia while its imports of mainly tobacco, was worth RM210,000. --

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