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Mahathir urges KL, Montevideo to boost relations

Kamarul Yunus in Montevideo

MONTEVIDEO (Uruguay), Thurs: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today urged the city administrations of Montevideo and Kuala Lumpur to develop a closer relationship and exchange programmes pertaining to national development.

Speaking at the presentation of keys to the city of Montevideo, Dr Mahathir said capital cities have a unique role to play in national development.

"They can act as catalysts and a testing ground for national change. They also serve as magnets for new ideas and they often generate enthusiasm and hope that touches the whole nation," he said, adding the keys that he received today is a symbol of friendship and cordiality of the Uruguayan people, especially of Montevideo.

Apart from trade and investments, Dr Mahathir said there are other avenues for cooperation between the two capital cities.

"Through such cooperation, we can share experience and learn from each other," he said, adding that in this context, Malaysia would like to provide training in various fields under the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme.

Dr Mahathir said the Government, particularly himself, will encourage and support Malaysian private sector cooperation and involvement in Uruguay, especially in the city of Montevideo.

"In the short time that I have been here, I have sensed that this is a city eager to exploit its central location in the Mercosur (Common Market of the South) region and to attract foreign investment.

"As you are aware, I have come to Uruguay with a large delegation of Malaysian business leaders. I feel confident that they will leave Uruguay with a keener sense of the attractiveness and business potential of this city.

"They (Malaysian businessmen) would also have established important new contacts with the business leaders of this city. I hope this will soon lead to new business ventures, enhanced trade and economic cooperation," he added.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir, who visited the Uruguay Supreme Court of Justice, said there is a need to understand the judicial system of other countries while trying to forge mutual cooperation, including in trade.

"We want to seek new opportunities for cooperation. We want to exchange ideas and views and share experience as to how we can better face the challenges of development. Part of this process is understanding the judicial system," he added.

For cultural and historical reasons, Dr Mahathir said Uruguay and Malaysia have different judicial systems.

"If we are to encourage greater trade and investments, there is a need for greater understanding of our respective judicial and legal systems."

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