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Bosnia-Business

MAHATHIR VIEWS M'SIA-BOSNIA LINK-UP AS STRATEGIC

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 13 (Bernama) -- Malaysia considers partnership with Bosnia and Herzegovina as strategic and will ensure the involvement of its businessmen and capital in the Balkan nation.

Co-chairman of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Haris Silajdzic, said this was conveyed by Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad when the Malaysian prime minister called on him and the other co-chairman of the council, Boro Busic, here today.

"It's extremely important that Dr Mahathir has said that he will personally see that Malaysian businessmen and capital are engaged in Bosnia and Herzegovina and he considers that partnership a strategic one," Silajdzic said.

Speaking at a news conference marking the end of their five-day visit to Malaysia, Silajdzic said both he and Busic took the opportunity to ask Dr Mahathir to facilitate an arrangement on the guarantee of Malaysian business activities there.

Silajdzic also said the message that he wanted to convey was that business was safe in Bosnia and Herzegovina and that his country was different from what it used to be a few years ago.

He said his country had a highly-skilled labour force, the technological edge in several areas and could serve as a "bridge" to some parts of Europe.

"In the energy (sector), we can offer some of the facilities which have been damaged although that will need initial capital," he said.

Meanwhile, Busic said both of them had invited Dr Mahathir and Malaysian businessmen to visit Bosnia and Herzegovina as soon as possible to check out avenues for co-operation there.

On the situation in Bosnia, Silajdzic said it would need the presence of foreign military troops even after the 1998 deadline for their withdrawal.

"It would be, in my mind, a mistake to withdraw too early," he said. Nato forces are scheduled to withdraw from war-torn Bosnia in June next year.

Silajdzic also said the Dayton peace accord could not be negotiated anymore and that it was time for its full implementation.

Meanwhile, Busic said although there were problems in the implementation of the accord, he saw the peace process as moving forward.

In another development, Malaysia Bosnia-Herzegovina Business Council director Abdul Rashid Abdul Ghani said discussions were taking place between entrepreneurs from both sides in several areas like banking, construction, housing, food industry and manufacturing.

He said the Bosnian business community had also been invited to participate in environment-related projects in Malaysia.

Abdul Rashid said Malaysia should also tap the highly-skilled labour force of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

He also called on cash-rich Malaysian companies to be involved in social projects in the Balkan state like re-building places of worship damaged by the war. -- BERNAMA

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