

17 FEB 1998

Goh-visit

GOH ENDS TRIP ON HIGH NOTE

MELAKA, Feb 17 (Bernama) -- Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong returned home to the republic from this evening after a two-day official visit to Malaysia which he described as a "useful trip".

He said his discussion with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in Kuala Lumpur yesterday had covered many areas and he believed they had enjoyed their talks.

"He was very hospitable and to be driven by another Prime Minister is quite an honour," he told reporters after visiting a subsidiary of a Singapore electronics giant at the Batu Berendam Free Trade Zone near here.

Dr Mahathir had called on Goh at his hotel suite in Kuala Lumpur this morning before taking his Singapore counterpart in a Proton Putra to visit the broadcasting centre of the All-Asia Satellite Television and Radio Company (ASTRO) outside the federal capital.

Goh and his entourage then left by road for this historical city where he was entertained to lunch by the state government at a seaside resort.

Asked if he expected increased Singapore investment in Malaysia following his visit, Goh said he hoped so, saying the purpose of his visit was partly to show confidence in the Malaysian economy.

"We will certainly encourage Singapore investors to invest over here especially since Dr Mahathir has said that he welcomes investors from Singapore," said Goh, who last made an official visit to Malaysia in 1994.

In Melaka alone, Singapore has so far invested RM235 million with 50 more investment applications being processed.

On tourism, Goh said Melaka could tap opportunities from Singapore's own tourism sector to woo visitors to the state.

"We have about seven million tourists coming to Singapore every year... it is actually up to the Chief Minister of Melaka (Datuk Seri Abu Zahar Isnin) to see whether they can get these tourists to also come to Melaka," he said.

Abu Zahar told reporters later that he has directed state tourism officials to carry out promotional campaigns in Singapore to lure foreign tourists in the republic to Melaka.

Asked to elaborate on tourism manpower training as mentioned in their joint communique after his talks with Dr Mahathir, Goh said Singapore was willing to offer places for training to Malaysians.

"It depends on what Malaysia would like us to do...we place a lot of emphasis on manpower training.

"If there are courses that we have which are of help to them then we can of course place their people in Singapore," said Goh who chose to travel home by road from here.

Asked what he expected to see along the way, Goh smiled and said: "I expect to see the second link."

The "Second Link" is a two-kilometre bridge connecting Gelang Patah in Johor with Tuas in Singapore which was opened to traffic last Jan 2.

It has since served as a convenient alternative to the increasingly congested Causeway that has for years been the sole link between the two countries. -- BERNAMA

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