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Kansai

KANSAI COMPANIES TO CONTINUE INVESTMENT IN MALAYSIA

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 16 (Bernama) -- The Kansai Economic Federation (Kankeiren) today assured the Malaysian government that its members will continue to invest in Malaysia despite the current economic problems faced by the country.

In giving the assurance to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, its chairman, Yasuo Shingu, said the federation's members were confident of the country's economy and had no intention to close their factories here or were pulling out their investments from Malaysia.

"We have found out from our visit here that Malaysia is a trustworthy country and we will continue to operate in this country," he said through an interpreter after a two-hour meeting between Dr Mahathir and the Kankeiren business delegation at the Prime Minister's office here.

Shingu, who is also chairman of Sumitomo Metal Industries Ltd, headed the federation's business delegation, which is on an 11-day visit to Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore to exchange opinions on global issues in the 21st century such as strategies for development, regional cooperation and their challenges to further development.

The 24-member delegation is also on a mission to strengthen the ties between Asean and the Kansai region through examining the role of Japanese business circle and industries as well as promoting the Kansai region itself.

According to the prospectus on the federation issued to reporters, Kansai's total export to Malaysia last year stood at 405 billion yen while import totalled 215 billion yen.

Shingu said the delegation was impressed with the firm commitment of the government to proceed with efforts to make Malaysia a developed country by the year 2020.

"Most of us (the delegation) have some kind of business in Malaysia and my company also has business operation in Penang," he said.

When asked whether Japanese companies were badly affected by the current economic situation, he said: "Although these companies are affected, I wouldn't say that they are critically affected because 80 per cent of them are export oriented."

He said the current economic problem would not make the companies change their commitment towards Malaysia.

Among the companies represented in the delegation were Matsushita Electric Industrial Co Ltd, Hitachi Zosen Corporation, Marubeni Corporation, Daikin Industries, Mitsui & Co Ltd, Omron Corporation, Kawasaki Heavy Industries and Nissho Iwai Corporation. -- BERNAMA

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