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BANGLADESH-TRADE

BANGLADESH SEES PORT LINK A BOOST IN TRADE WITH MALAYSIA

By: Ahmad Zukiman Zain

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 12 (Bernama) -- The direct contact between Bangladesh's main port city Chittagong and Port Klang is a boost to increase trade, outgoing Bangladesh High Commissioner Wajid Ali Khan Panni said today.

Most products, which used to be exported through other ports, can now be shipped directly, making the cost more reasonable, he said in an interview with Bernama.

"I see that there'll be a lot more trade between Chittagong and Port Klang," said Panni, who is ending a two-and-a-half year stint in Malaysia. He will make a farewell audience on the Yang di-Pertuan Agong at the Istana Negara tomorrow.

He said Malaysia had offered to help develop the Chittagong port.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had said during a visit to Dhaka in March that Malaysia will continue to increase trade and investment with Bangladesh in efforts to create more employment opportunities.

Panni said Malaysian products, especially electronic items, were very well known in Bangladesh.

"The passenger traffic between Malaysia and Bangladesh is between 17,000 and 20,000 people a year and Bangladeshis return home with a huge number of Malaysian products worth some RM2,000 to RM3,000," he said.

Total trade between the two nations last year stood at RM724.4 million compared with RM563.8 million in 1997, with Malaysian exports amounting to RM699.6 million.

He urged Malaysian entrepreneurs to set up industries in Bangladesh which has offered Malaysia an export processing zone.

"They can set up industries for re-export," he said of the export processing zone. A similar zone had been offered to South Korea.

Apart from the low cost of labour, he said Bangladesh had the raw materials and infrastructure for industries. -- BERNAMA

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