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MALAYSIA-TRADE

MALAYSIA TO STUDY TRADE POTENTIAL OF SMALL NATIONS

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 23 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Malaysia will study the potential of trading with small nations as a vital approach towards developing the national economy.

Since Malaysia forged links with nations of the South, which were once considered weak and without any potential, the country's trade with them had increased to RM90 billion, he said.

"As a trading nation, Malaysia needs to look for more trading partners as we cannot always depend on our traditional ones," he told a news conference on his return here after visits to Russia and China.

Dr Mahathir said his visits to Khabarovsk and Buryatia in the Russian Federation were successful in efforts towards increasing trade.

He said Malaysia could not consider any place as devoid of potential.

"At first, we may not see the potential but if we made a study, we can have useful information which can help us increase our trade," he said.

The Prime Minister also said Malaysia would have relations with various places, including those which were not independent, and study their trade potential.

For instance, Buryatia and Khabarovsk were not independent states but were part of the Russian Federation which has 89 states in all.

He said the visit to parts of Russia would enhance Malaysia's relations with the Russian Federation as a whole.

Dr Mahathir said his visit to Siberia augured well for Malaysia's relations with Russia.

He said the Siberians were a friendly people but their state of development, especially in transportation was still not adequate to improve their communications with the rest of the world.

Elaborating on his visit to Khabarovsk, the Prime Minister said it was to see the aircraft manufacturing industry and study the trade and investment potential.

He also disclosed that one Malaysian company has been producing plywood for a long time in Khabarovsk.

The Prime Minister said his visit to China was to commemorate the visit made 25 years ago by the late Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak, paving the way for the establishment of diplomatic relations.

Dr Mahathir held talks with China's President Jiang Zemin and Prime Minister Zhu Rongji on bilateral and international matters.

At Ulan Ude, Buryatia, the Prime Minister inspected the local helicopter manufacturing industry.

He said Buryatia has good potential and has forged co-operation with Airod to refurbish helicopters.

Dr Mahathir also studied trade and investment potential there. --

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