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Agong-Visit

AGONG'S VISIT ENHANCES M'SIA-BRUNEI TIES

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BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, Feb 2 (Bernama) -- The Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah and Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Siti Aishah's three-day state visit to Brunei Darussalam has further strengthened bilateral ties between the two countries.

Information Minister Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob said Brunei ministers when met during the visit expressed keen interests to forge closer relations with Malaysia especially in medical facilities and higher education-related sectors.

"Many of them are awed over the rapid growth of Kuala Lumpur. And they have very high regards for our Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad," he said when met at a get-together with Malaysians, here.

Although this is the first state visit by the royal couple to Brunei since their installation as the Yang di-Pertuan Agong and Raja Permaisuri Agong on April 26 last year, the warm welcome and reception accorded to them by the Royal Brunei government and the people clearly showed the long-established closeness between the two nations.

"And in keeping with the tradition, the royal couple visited Brunei first before making official visits to other countries," said Khalil, who is the minister-in-attendance.

The visit took the royal couple to the Royal Regalia building, Brunei Museum, Brunei Arts and Handicraft Training Centre, Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah Foundation, royal tomb and a boat cruise across Sungai Brunei.

Khalil said the King and Queen were very happy with their visit which started on Monday.

Speaking at a reception hosted for the Brunei royalty last night, Sultan Salahuddin said Malaysia would step up efforts to foster closer understanding and co-operation in all fields for the mutual benefit of the two countries.

He said Malaysia and Brunei cannot be contented with the progress achieved thus far as the world was getting increasingly challenging and populated owing to the globalisation era and borderless world.

"We must co-operate and help one another based on our strength and advantages to move forward to realise our visions and aspirations on the principle of mutual respect," he said.

Collaboration between the two countries at Asean and international levels have contributed immensely to the region's prosperity and security, he said.

"Malaysia is always sincere and ready to help and co-operate with Brunei in all fields including economic, trade and investment. This is not only between the two countries but also with all Third World nations," he said.

He also expressed confidence that the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit to be hosted by Brunei in November would be a success.

Earlier, in his speech, Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah said the private sector should be encouraged to invest in the two countries.

"Our businessmen must co-operate in seizing the business opportunities available in this region especially in the Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East Asean Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA)," he said.

He said co-operation within BIMP-EAGA would certainly help to bolster overall trade among member countries.

"The cultural heritage and the values of the same stock we inherit gave us the unique opportunity to contribute to the regional and international affairs," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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