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Rastam-Mahathir

GOOD TIME FOR M'SIAN BUSINESSMEN TO INVEST IN INDONESIA

JAKARTA, March 8 (Bernama) -- The political and security situation in Indonesia has improved tremendously compared to a year ago and now may be a good time for Malaysian entrepreneurs to invest in the country.

Malaysian ambassador to Indonesia Datuk Rastam Mohamed Isa said today that Indonesia, with one per cent growth registered last year and on the road to economic recovery, offered a lot of opportunities for Malaysian businessmen.

"The riots and demonstrations which occurred almost daily before Abdurrahman Wahid took over as president last October have virtually stopped," he said.

"The political and security situation has improved tremendously. Even in troubled areas such as Maluku, the situation has stabilised."

Rastam was briefing Malaysian journalists ahead of the arrival of the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad tomorrow for an over-night official visit.

He said the focus of Dr Mahathir's visit was on enhancing economic cooperation and the participation of Malaysian entrepreneurs in Indonesia's economic recovery.

He said Malaysian businessmen, who were still uncertain about Indonesia and chose to wait-and-see, might be missing a lot of opportunities.

Malaysia, with cumulative investments of US\$7.6 billion, is currently ranked 11th among foreign investing countries in Indonesia.

Malaysian investment is largely in oil palm plantations in Sumatera and Kalimantan.

Dr Mahathir is accompanied by a high-powered delegation of four ministers -- Finance Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar, International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz and Primary Industries Minister Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik.

Also accompanying the Prime Minister is a 150-strong business delegation led by MAS' chairman Tan Sri Tajudin Ramli.

Rastam said the Indonesian government under Abdurrahman was keen to have Malaysians participate in the country's economic recovery particularly in areas such as tourism and multi-media development.

The Indonesian government, which was embarking on administrative reforms, was also keen to share Malaysia's expertise in civil administration.

In a departure from normal protocol, president Abdurrahman will personally receive Dr Mahathir on arrival at the Halim Perdanakusuma airport here at 10 am tomorrow.

-- BERNAMA

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