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MALAYSIA-UNITED KINGDOM

UK COMPANIES SEE MALAYSIA COMING OUT OF CRISIS

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 5 (Bernama) -- Malaysia is coming out of the financial crisis that had affected the region in the last two years in a very effective and sustainable way, say representatives of several United Kingdom companies with investments in Malaysia.

"They (the UK companies here) have said to me that they are confident, now that with the measures being put in place by the administration, Malaysia will continue to attract new investments and was also in a strong position in the region to continue to develop," said United Kingdom Minister for Trade, Richard Caborn.

"That is good for business confidence. I will convey the message back," he said at a press conference after almost an hour long meeting with the Minister of International Trade and Industry, Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz, here today.

He also expressed confidence that the British private sector would continue to invest in Malaysia.

In the last two years, UK companies have invested about US1.5 billion in Malaysia, he added.

He said a UK trade fair would be held here early next year as well as a number of ministerial visits from UK to Malaysia were also scheduled for the next 12 to 18 months.

He said Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamed is also expected to visit UK early this October.

Mahathir is expected to visit Cambridge, where he will be looking at the development of multimedia there, Caborn said.

Meanwhile, Rafidah said Malaysia and the UK had strong foundation to build their future both economically and in also other areas.

Investment ties between the two countries were no longer one way traffic, she said.

She said there were 172 manufacturing operations in Malaysia with British equity interests in a broad range of activities and also 275 British companies in non-manufacturing sector.

Around 27 Malaysian companies have set up regional offices in UK to service the UK and European markets, she added.

"This is something good and maybe we should ask the private sector of both countries to further identify areas to strengthen the relationship," she added.

Total trade between Malaysia and UK for the first six months of this year amounted to RM8.758 billion. This constituted exports by Malaysia amounting to RM5.736 billion and imports RM3.022 billion.

Last year, total trade amounted to RM17.678 billion or 3.1 percent of Malaysia's global trade. Malaysia's export to UK was valued at RM12.067 billion while imports stood at RM5.611 billion. -- BERNAMA

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