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Najib-Myanmar

M'SIA OFFERS MILITARY TECHNOLOGY TO MYANMAR

By: Shahrullizan Rusli

YANGON, Aug 30 (Bernama) -- Malaysia-Myanmar military ties have entered a new phase with the Myanmar military ruler agreeing to send a technical team to Malaysia to study the country's sophisticated defence technology.

Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said except in military training, defence ties between Malaysia and Myanmar were very limited previously.

"They are very keen to know our expertise in defence technology and how they can benefit from the knowledge and expertise Malaysia have," he told Bernama in Bagan at the end of his four-day visit to Myanmar.

The technical team comprising officials from Myanmar's three services -- land, sea and air -- would be sent as soon as possible to explore the opportunities available in the local defence industry.

Although Myanmar had its own defence industry, it was confined to manufacturing short-range rockets, ammunition, bombs and land mines.

Their technology is quite old but creative to the extent of inventing own rifle merged with the technology of AK-47 Russian-made rifle and rifles of other European countries.

Najib said Myanmar armed forces were keen to acquire defence technology available in Malaysia and in turn Malaysia would tap the investment opportunities in that country.

The highlight of Najib's visit to Myanmar was his meeting with Prime Minister Senior Gen Than Shwe who is also chairman of the State Peace and Development Council on Tuesday.

Than Shwe told Najib that he was impressed with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's leadership and was implementing the proposals made by him.

"I feel this visit is successful as the Myanmar government is showing keen interest on efforts to enhance bilateral ties between Kuala Lumpur and Yangon," he said.

Najib said Malaysia was prepared to help develop Myanmar and not merely to enhance friendship.

"If Malaysia can contribute towards Myanmar's stability and prosperity, the region will also benefit including Malaysia," he said.

Najib also encouraged Malaysian entrepreneurs to invest in Myanmar. Myanmar, with a 44 million population, besides providing cheap labour, was rich in untapped natural resources.

"Dr Mahathir himself encouraged Malaysian entrepreneurs to seek business opportunities in Myanmar. The 150 entrepreneurs based here are involved in various businesses including hotel, trade and logging," he said.

He said the secret of doing business in Myanmar was the ability of businessmen to forge cordial ties with the government.

"The prospect of getting business is very good indeed if they established close ties," he said.

Najib said Malaysian entrepreneurs also had good opportunities in Information Technology (IT) as the Myanmar government was learning from Malaysia's expertise in preparation to enter the Internet network.

Despite entering the millennium era, Myanmar still does not have Internet.

The communication network was still backward and its infrastructure facilities was 50 years behind Malaysia.

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