

Canada enhances ties with Malaysia

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KUALA LUMPUR: Canada's Secretary of State (Asia-Pacific) David Kilgour has "rejuvenated" Malaysia-Canada bilateral ties with a hectic two-day visit here.

Leading his country's first political mission here in five years, Kilgour left on Thursday evening after being kept on his toes for most of his 35-hour visit.

He described his meeting with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in Putrajaya on Wednesday as "very productive." The meeting was initially fixed for 30 minutes but lasted almost an hour.

"It was a great honour to meet Dr Mahathir, who granted me more time despite him having to prepare for the Umno general assembly.

"I conveyed Canada's appreciation for the helpful role that Malaysia has played in the campaign against terror and also underlined Canada's commitment to expanding bilateral trade and investment opportunities, as well as our support for Malaysia's Vision 2020 goals.

"My officers took down nine pages of notes of my meeting with Dr Mahathir, and we will study them carefully. I have had an extremely useful trip," he said at the Canadian High Commission here before departing for Jakarta.

Kilgour, who was responsible for Latin America and Africa before being put in charge of the Asia-Pacific region in January, was given a briefing by the Multimedia Development Corporation in Cyberjaya and addressed the Malaysia-Canada Business Council before meeting

with the Institute of Strategic and International Studies later.

He was also a special guest at the Canada Day reception hosted by Canadian High Commissioner to Malaysia Jean McCloskey at her residence in Jalan Langgak Golf on Wednesday.

On Thursday, Kilgour officially opened the new Canadian Chancery at the 17th Floor of Menara Tan & Tan. Later, he held discussions with Deputy Foreign Minister Datuk Dr Leo Michael Toyad.

He said it was important to note that Malaysia was Canada's largest two-way trading partner in Asean, with an annual trade balance of between RM6bil and RM7.2bil. Kilgour was accompanied here by Surrey Central MP Gurmant Grewal.