

04 SEPT 2002  
Boycott  
BOYCOTT OF MALAYSIAN GOODS NIXED

MANILA, Sept 4 (Bernama) -- Philippine Trade and Industry Secretary Mar Roxas today opposed calls by militant groups to boycott Malaysian products, saying that it would affect trade relations between the two Asean countries.

"Let us not aggravate the situation, especially when Malaysian Prime Minister (Datuk Seri Dr) Mahathir (Mohamad) has already ordered a moratorium on the deportation of Filipinos. Our diplomatic efforts seem to be working," he told reporters.

Migrante International, an alliance of migrant workers, has called for a boycott of Malaysian products to express outrage over the alleged "inhumane" treatment of deportees from Sabah.

Roxas appealed to those concerned to exercise restraint, saying that the Philippines enjoyed healthy trade ties with Malaysia.

The Philippines imports electrical machinery, semi-conductors and agricultural produce from Malaysia.

Roxas noted that the Philippines earned US\$1 billion (US\$1=RM3.80) in exports to Malaysia in 2001 of the total US\$22 billion export earnings for that year.

From January to April this year, Roxas said, exports to Malaysia had already reached US\$470 million while imports from Malaysia amounted to US\$350 million.

"So we have a positive US\$120 million in trading surplus with Malaysia," he said.

Roxas said the government was doing its best to resolve the deportees' dispute without straining bilateral trade relations.

-- BERNAMA  
ALJ MAM JK