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Mahathir-Visit

DR MAHATHIR'S VISIT TO BOOST MALAYSIA-SWITZERLAND TIES

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ZURICH, June 8 (Bernama) -- Barely a month after visiting the United States (US), Japan and South Korea, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad arrives in Switzerland tomorrow to state Malaysia's firm stand in the fight against terrorism and sincerity in establishing friendly relations with other nations.

This will be raised during his meeting with Switzerland President Kaspar Villiger on Monday to further strengthen the existing close relations between Kuala Lumpur and Berne.

The discussions between the two leaders and the subsequent delegation meetings are expected to focus on bilateral issues as well as regional and international matters for mutual benefits.

Generally, Malaysia views Switzerland, which is also like Malaysia, as adopting a non-confrontational approach in several international matters, especially in easing tension between countries embroiled in conflicts.

Switzerland sees Malaysia as an influential Asian power in the international arena, at least among the South-east Asian region, whose voice is increasingly being sought by major world powers.

For example, the move by Washington to accept Malaysia's approach and determination in tackling issues on violence and militancy is a significant recognition and must also be known by other governments.

The Prime Minister's visit will not only enable Malaysia to state its stand in terms of inter-governmental relations but also to clarify that the country had never changed its attitude in welcoming foreign investors, especially those resulting in a win-win situation.

Although trade between Switzerland and Malaysia is considered small compared to the other European countries, Switzerland offers Malaysia an opportunity in enhancing skills in engineering, electronic, computer and automotive technologies besides agriculture and animal husbandry.

It also provides an opportunity for Malaysia to increase cooperation in the field of finance as it is a top financial centre in Europe and the world.

On the other hand, Malaysia must be viewed as a suitable and economical location for the Swiss manufacturing industry to grow and set up manufacturing facilities here.

According to trade statistics for January to March 2002, the two-way trade was favourable to Switzerland which exported goods worth RM714.5 Million to Malaysia and imported less than RM135.6 million.

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