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TRIP-MARKET

PM'S THREE-NATION VISIT OPENS AVENUE FOR NEW MARKETS

By: Mohd Arshi Daud

KUALA LUMPUR, April 24 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's week long trip to Morocco, Libya and Bahrain had opened avenues for Malaysian companies to penetrate new markets in these economies.

Apart from Petronas, Malaysian companies' presence in the north African states of Morocco and Libya and the Gulf island state of Bahrain was small.

But the visit, aimed at enhancing bilateral and commercial ties is set to change the future outlook of Malaysia's trade with the three countries.

Various follow-up meetings have been planned by the some 70 businessmen who accompanied Dr Mahathir during the trip which ended last Monday.

"The trip has been a huge success as the Prime Minister was at the forefront in opening the door to everybody," said Perbadanan Komputer Nasional Bhd (NASCOM) chief executive officer, Zulkifli Mamat.

"Its now up to the business delegates to follow up and take advantage of the three countries' craving for our products, technology and expertise," he told Bernama in Bahrain last Sunday.

Zulkifli, one of the businessmen in Dr Mahathir's entourage said the private and public sectors from the three countries had high confidence in made-in Malaysia products and some would be visiting his company soon.

NASCOM, which makes computers under the PC Suria brand name, aimed to appoint agents in Morocco, Libya and Bahrain to take advantage of the e-education programme in the countries, he said.

The company, which already has 55 representative offices worldwide and exports 90 percent of its products, enjoys a monthly turnover of RM175 million per month.

For made-in Malaysia television set manufacturer, Anggun Permai Industries Sdn Bhd, a team of potential Libyan buyers would be visiting its plant in Pandamaran, Klang in the next two to three months.

"A Libyan government-owned TV manufacturer, which produces 150,000 TV sets per year is keen to buy 20,000 units of our TV per annum," said the company chief executive officer, Tengku Ngah Putra Tengku Ahmad Tajuddin.

The Libyan company is expected to firmed up orders to buy large screen TV of 34 inch and above sometimes next August.

"If concluded, the sales, valued at RM24 million will be the biggest export market for Anggun Permai," said Ngah Putra, who at 34 is the youngest business delegate in the tour.

Anggun Permai, which produces brands like Nikom, Zapporo, Akira and MEC is already exporting its TVs to the non-traditional markets of Siberia, Kazakhstan, Krisgystan, Mongolia and Lebanon.

The company, which also has plants in Krisgystan and Siberia forecasts to register sales of RM30 million this year, double that of the RM15 million made in 2001.

Ngah Putra also said that the trip would be more effective if officials from Malaysian banks with expertise in financing exports like Bank Industri were included in the delegation.

"They will have a better understanding of the financing required for us to penetrate these markets," he added.

Sia Ka Ho, managing director of Isito Technology Sdn Bhd said his company, which produces telephone, PABX and pay phones was negotiating not only to supply but also to assemble its products in Morocco and Libya.

"The Moroccan party will be coming to Malaysia in May with the aim of

concluding a deal.

"This negotiation, if successful involves exporting to the European Union telecommunication equipments worth US\$12 million (RM45.6 million) per year," he said.

Commenting on the trip in general, Sia said it was effective in the sense that the Malaysian business delegates got to meet their counterparts who were decision-makers and who came to approach them to seek business.

Datuk Megat Mohamed Abdul Wahab, managing director of Royal Mint of Malaysia Sdn Bhd, Malaysia's only mint company concurred.

"In a worse case scenario we, businessmen normally have to look up for potential customers through their yellow pages to meet potential clients.

"To be a part of the entourage is a recognition, not only in terms of expediting our movement but also facilitating meetings with the right people," he said.

Megat Mohamed said that the business delegates, the majority of whom were the young breed of businessmen, looked forward for similar trade delegation in the future.

"Trip like this can help introduce to the outside world, the new industries that surface in Malaysia every five to six years," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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