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PM-India

PRIME MINISTER EXPECTED TO VISIT INDIA ON OCT 16 AND 17

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 27 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will make a two-day visit to India on Oct 16 and 17, said Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar.

He said the visit demonstrated the importance that Malaysia placed on strengthening the momentum established between the two countries.

"The close rapport between our leaders and friendly ties between our two peoples in creating greater awareness, translating into closer co-operation and collaboration between the two sides in fields covering trade investment, education, science and technology and others," he said in his opening remark at the third Malaysia-India joint commission meeting here today.

He said India continued to be Malaysia's largest trading partner in South Asia with total bilateral trade last year amounting to RM8,928 million (US\$2,349 million), of which the balance of trade amounting to RM3,058 million (US\$805 million) was in Malaysia's favour.

"However total bilateral trade reflected a decline when compared to the preceding year which amounted to RM10,069 million (US\$2,650 million)," he said.

Syed Hamid said from January to June this year, total trade had amounted to RM4,171 million (US\$1,098 million) with exports and imports amounting to RM2,939 million (US\$773 million) and RM1,232 million respectively.

"On investment, Malaysia is actively involved in construction projects in India, such as highway construction. Malaysian companies are involved in projects valued at RM11.6 billion," he said.

The first Malaysia-India Joint Commission meeting was held in 1993 followed by the second meeting in New Delhi two years ago.

Syed Hamid said the agenda of today's meeting concerned common bilateral issues such as trade, investment, education, defence, agriculture, science and technology.

"I'm confident that we would be able to discuss all issues in a friendly and frank manner, and given the constructive attitude on both sides, we will have a fruitful meeting to achieve our objective of bringing prosperity and well-being to the people of both countries," he said.

-- BERNAMA

AZH AHH AO