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Liddell: KL a great launching pad for British businesses

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - Malaysia is a great launching pad for British businesses, in particular Scottish businessmen, to invest in this region.

British Secretary of State for Scotland Helen Liddell said this in an interview at the end of her two-day visit to Kuala Lumpur last Friday.

Besides the education sector, she says information technology (IT) as well as the oil and gas (O&G) industry are among areas which has the potential to be further explored, including joint co-operation.

"The links are strong, the potential is enormous and our trade with one another is holding up very well despite recent difficulties (due to the Sept 11 terrorist attacks in the United States) which I'm sure will recover even stronger," she said in an interview at her hotel suite.

According to Liddell, there were areas of common interest that underlined the British Government's keen interest and commitment in forging links with Malaysia.

In this respect, she says British Prime Minister Tony Blair and his Malaysian counterpart Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad have been in regular contact with each other.

She says her short but very productive visit was aimed at boosting links between Britain, in particular Scotland, and Malaysia.

During her visit, Liddell held separate meetings with International Trade Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz, Energy, Communications and Multimedia Minister Datuk Leo Moggie and Education Minister Tan Sri Musa Mohamad.

She also met Petronas chairman Tan Sri Azizan Zainul Abidin and Multimedia Development Corporation executive chairman Tan Dr Othman Yeop Abdullah, besides visiting the International Medical University (IMU) in Bukit Jalil.

She says trade issues had to consider the needs of the changing economy especially on selecting niches such as in the education sector.

For example, she says, many Malaysians are studying at the University of Strathclyde in Scotland which had forged collaboration with the IMU.

As for O&G, she says Britain's expertise in the North Sea could be useful to Malaysia. Liddell also had fruitful discussions with Petronas on the matter.

Liddell said she was impressed with IT facilities during her visit to Cyberjaya. She says there was huge opportunities in IT for joint co-operation particularly in research of which British Telecoms is a leader in the field.

Although trade between Britain and Malaysia was in Kuala Lumpur's favour, she says Malaysia was a vital country that "we look up as a very important member of the international community".

As of October 2001, Malaysian exports to Britain stood at RM9.5 billion against RM4.9 billion. Between 1990 and 1999, British investments in Malaysia totalled RM16.4 billion.

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