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Mahathir-Timor

POTENTIAL FOR TRADE BETWEEN M'SIA AND TIMOR LESTE

PUTRAJAYA, Aug 12 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has expressed confidence that economic ties between Malaysia and newly independent Timor Leste could be expanded.

He said although current bilateral economic relations were unimpressive, there was potential for trade and investment between the two countries to be developed.

He said there were already 90 Malaysian businessmen in Timor Leste involved in various economic activities such as consulting and accounting, hotel and restaurants, and commerce and general trading.

"I'm confident that this level of cooperation can be further expanded," he said at a dinner held in honour of visiting Timor Leste Prime Minister Dr Mari Bim Amude Alkatiri at Seri Perdana here tonight.

He said Malaysia would continue to encourage its private sector to go to Timor Leste to explore opportunities for the mutual benefit of the two countries, such as in petroleum and gas exploration, infrastructure development, banking and insurance, and agriculture.

He hoped that Timor Leste would assist Malaysian entrepreneurs in their endeavours.

Dr Mahathir also assured Timor Leste of Malaysia's commitment to develop close and mutually beneficial relations with the country.

"We will maintain our cooperation with you in your development efforts within our capacities and abilities under the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme," he said.

He said Malaysia would continue to provide training for Timor Leste's defence forces personnel to help enhance their capabilities in maintaining peace stability in the country.

He pointed out that Malaysia was among the first to set up a Liaison Office in Dili in efforts to foster and facilitate closer cooperation and relations with Timor Leste.

Dr Alkatiri, who is heading a 27-member delegation that includes 17 businessmen, arrived here yesterday for a five-day visit.

He is expected to have an audience with Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Syed Putra Jamalullail tomorrow.

-- BERNAMA

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