

06 MAR 2002

Goff-Visit

NEW ZEALAND FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE MINISTER ARRIVES

KUALA LUMPUR, March 6 (Bernama) -- New Zealand Foreign Affairs and Trade Minister Phil Goff arrived here today for a two-day official visit to Malaysia.

A Foreign Ministry statement issued here today said the visit is at the invitation of Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar aimed at further strengthening bilateral ties and cooperation between both countries.

Goff, accompanied by two senior government officials, will hold bilateral consultations with Syed Hamid and will call on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

He will also meet Defence Minister Datuk Mohamed Najib Tun Razak during the visit. Goff will conclude the visit with a brief one-day trip to Sarawak.

The bilateral meeting between Goff and Syed Hamid will focus on further promoting bilateral cooperation between both countries including in the areas of economy and trade, education, science and technology, defence and security.

Both sides will also exchange views during the meeting on various regional and international issues of mutual interest including efforts to further strengthen regional stability and economic cooperation as well as initiatives in effectively combating terrorism.

Currently, Malaysia is New Zealand's largest trading partner among the Asean countries with bilateral trade volume amounting to around RM2.4 billion last year.

An encouraging number of Malaysian companies is currently operating actively in several key economic sectors in New Zealand such as manufacturing, food processing, real estate development and forestry.

Accumulated New Zealand's investment in Malaysia's manufacturing sector up to last year amounted to RM36 million.

The cooperation in the field of education has also registered an encouraging expansion following the implementation of twinning programmes between the institutions of higher learning of both countries and about 1,059 Malaysian students are currently pursuing their higher education in New Zealand.

Besides that, Malaysia and New Zealand are enjoying close cooperation in the areas of science and technology, and planning to expand the areas of environmental technology, biotechnology as well as information and communication technology.

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