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CITIES-MOOD
ANOTHER TALE OF TWO CITIES

MELBOURNE, Sept 22 (Bernama) -- Australia Malaysia Business Council (AMBC) national president Ted Sharp has found the business mood in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore contrasting when he visited the two cities recently.

Writing in the AMBC Bulletin, Sharp, a senior Perth lawyer said while the mood among the business and professional community in Singapore was "very subdued", in Kuala Lumpur it was "less inhibited" among Malaysian business leaders.

"Clearly there are a number of factors at play in keeping the Singapore economy at its current inadequate level of activity," he said.

"The SARS virus was a significant factor in depressing economic activity in Singapore and its flow on effects for companies such as Singapore Airlines."

Sharp said it was reassuringly noticeable that the Singapore authorities were taking no chances at the airport where passengers were screened for any sign of the virus.

He said the heightened security at Singapore buildings, including the Australian High Commission, "causes one to reflect on the sad state of affairs our world is in".

"But in Kuala Lumpur, and I must say, perhaps with some understandable bias, I found an environment contrasting significantly to that in Singapore," Sharp said.

"Certainly like so many other countries, there are many aspects of the economy in Malaysia that are of concern and under pressure from competitors around the world as well as particular domestic issues.

"Add to that, the impending retirement of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and I would have thought that it would be reasonable to expect a fairly sombre atmosphere in the (Malaysian) capital as the population generally ponders what lies ahead.

"My perception of the mood in Kuala Lumpur, however, was one of which varied from cautious optimism at the low point to something less inhibited as to the economic and political future of Malaysia.

"This augers well for the future and I wish our friends and colleagues in Malaysia well in that regard." -- BERNAMA

NDC SHO SD