

26 JUL 2003

MAHATHIR-THAKSIN

DR MAHATHIR, THAKSIN TO MEET FOR BILATERAL MEETING IN LANGKAWI

By: Wan Nurzila Wan Abdul Rahman

LANGKAWI, July 26 (Bernama) -- Thai Prime Minister Dr Thaksin Shinawatra will be here for a two-day working visit beginning tomorrow in conjunction with the annual consultation with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

According to a Wisma Putra statement, this will be the Fourth Annual Consultation for Thaksin with Dr Mahathir since the former assumed office in 1999.

The statement said that the Annual Consultation between the two Prime Ministers has proven to be an invaluable forum towards fostering closer relations and cooperation between Malaysia and Thailand as it provides both leaders with the opportunity to discuss and review bilateral issues of mutual concern.

During the visit, both Prime Ministers are expected to officiate and deliver keynote address at the Malaysia-Thailand Technology Business Partnership Dialogue organised by Malaysian Industry Government Group for High Technology (MIGHT).

A four-eyed meeting will be held in the afternoon followed by a delegation meeting led by both Prime Ministers.

Malaysia and Thailand will be signing a Joint Declaration of the Malaysia-Thailand Dialogue Cooperation Framework and two Memoranda of Understanding on Cooperation on Customs matters and Cooperation on Stock Exchange.

Dr Mahathir and his Thai counterpart will witness the signings.

During the meeting, the two leaders are expected to discuss among others, the on-going cooperation between the two countries along the border areas, border demarcation issue, trade and investment, the Trans Malaysia-Thailand Pipe Line Project in Southern Thailand, cooperation in information and also various regional and international issues of mutual concern.

Meanwhile, the dialogue, themed "Harnessing Strategic Business and Technology Partnership for Economic Growth", is aimed at promoting closer collaboration and technological development between Malaysia and Thailand.

Several key speakers are expected to present their views on various issues, including automotive, agro-biotechnology, agriculture, information and communications technology (ICT) and eco-tourism.

Among the key speakers are International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz and Thailand's Minister of Science and Technology Phinij Jarusombat.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah will deliver the dialogue summation and closing address.

Malaysia is Thailand's fifth largest trading partner while Thailand ranks as Malaysia's seventh largest trading partner. Bilateral trade with Thailand amounted to US\$7.13 billion (RM27.09 billion) in 2002. -- BERNAMA

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