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Chirac-Club

FRANCO-M'SIAN BUSINESSMEN'S CLUB TO BOOST ECONOMIC LINKS

PUTRAJAYA, July 22 (Bernama) -- Malaysia and France have decided to set up a club comprising captains of industry from both countries to give more impetus to bilateral economic relations.

Paris and Kuala Lumpur have also pledged to further reinforce their cooperation in the technical, technology and scientific fields.

These efforts to further boost ties were revealed at a joint media conference by French President Jacques Chirac and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the end of the former's six-hour visit to Malaysia here tonight.

In addition, Chirac said France was keen to further develop the use of the French language in Malaysia and towards this end, a French school may be on the cards to facilitate the learning of the language.

"This is also to give a further boost to our scientific and technical cooperation," said Chirac.

He said efforts to enhance the exchange of students from both sides would also be looked into.

However, Chirac said that what was upmost on his mind in coming here was to express his respect and admiration for Dr Mahathir with whom he had enjoyed friendship for many years.

This respect, said the President, was clearly illustrated, in his mind, on Dr Mahathir's drive in building Putrajaya.

"I have found that this has been an extraordinary success and is evidence of Asia's capacity of creation.

"It is an expression of both modernity as well as culture and tradition. I am pleased to visit it and would like to congratulate the man behind it," he added.

Chirac was also asked on what he felt could be the future role for Dr Mahathir on the world stage after his retirement in October.

He responded by saying that it was not for him to tell Dr Mahathir what his plans should be.

"But what I can tell you is that, in my opinion, the world will lose a lot if he has no important role in the future in which he can show his dynamism and also his wisdom," he said.

The President also took the opportunity to congratulate Malaysia and Dr Mahathir for its chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement, and the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) summit in October.

Prior to the joint media conference, Dr Mahathir hosted a dinner for Chirac and his entourage which included the French Overseas Department and Territories, Brigitte Girardin.

Chirac later departed for the KL International Airport (KLIA) in Sepang to continue his journey to New Caledonia before proceeding to Tahiti to attend the South Pacific Nations Conference.

-- BERNAMA

MAM SR ABG