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Ireland-English

IRELAND READY TO HELP M'SIANS IMPROVE ENGLISH

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 10 (Bernama) -- Ireland's educational sector is ever ready to cooperate with Malaysia to help Malaysians improve their English language skills, Ireland's Foreign Affairs Minister Brian Cowen said today.

"Ireland has become the leading centre for the international study of this language due to the rising demand for knowledge of English.

"Thus, our educational institutions and language schools are hoping to be able to contribute to emerging Malaysian needs in the area of English language skills," he said during a visit to the National Library (PNM) here.

He said from his talks with Malaysian leaders, it was clear that the government was placing great emphasis on improving the people's proficiency in English.

Cowen, who is on a four-day visit, had met Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar.

There was no doubt that mastery of English had contributed to Ireland's quite dramatic economic advancement in recent years, he said.

This was partly due to the evolution of the global economy which had turned English into the prime medium of communication in business, technology and information, he said.

He also donated to PNM 150 books written by leading Irish writers such as Jonathan Swift, George Bernard Shaw, Oscar Wilde, James Joyce, W.B. Yeats, Sean O'Casey and Samuel Beckett.

Meanwhile, PNM Director-General Datuk Zawiyah Baba said the Irish embassy had been cooperating with PNM in the implementation of various activities.

They included the participation of Irish Ambassador Daniel Mulhall in the 'My Favourite Read' programme last year, she said.

"We would like to foster relationships and cooperation with Chester Beatty Library with regard to acquiring copies of Malay manuscripts from this prestigious library," she said.

-- BERNAMA

SOP AHH YBY