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Sri Lanka-Investment

SRI LANKA EXPECTS MORE INVESTMENTS FROM MALAYSIA

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 9 (Bernama) -- Sri Lanka expects to receive more investments from Malaysia, especially in the infrastructure and tourism sectors, Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe said here today.

He said while foreign investors would normally make investments based on business decisions, their investments in Sri Lanka would also mean investing in the country's peace process.

Wickremesinghe, who arrived here today for a two-day working visit, said the matter was discussed with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad when they met at Putrajaya this afternoon and during the Ministerial-level meeting earlier as part of the effort to improve economic co-operation between the two countries.

"My visit is to specially meet Dr Mahathir, to thank him for all the assistance that Malaysia has given to Sri Lanka during its difficult times," he told a press conference here.

"I also expressed my admiration to Dr Mahathir for the way he has transformed Malaysia into the country it is today," he added.

Wickremesinghe will witness the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between Sri Lanka and Malaysia tomorrow for the construction of the country's first toll highway linking its two largest cities, Colombo and Kandy.

On the peace talks with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE) to end the 20-year ethnic conflict in the island nation, he said both sides were expected to resume negotiations, either this month or next.

The talks between the Sri Lankan Government and LTTE were called off in February this year to allow the LTTE to study the Government's proposal for an interim administration in the country's north and east provinces based on the power sharing formula under a federal system of government.

Wickremesinghe said the coming peace talks were expected to be "tough rounds" and would determine the future of the political negotiations between the two parties.

He said the earlier rounds of talks were basically to enable both sides to get to know each other and to agree on the general principles of issues.

Asked whether he should meet with the LTTE leader, Vellupillai Prabhakaran, "face to face", Wickremesinghe said he did not believe it was necessary at this stage.

"I don't believe an eye-to-eye meeting will solve anything. I don't believe two people can resolve long standing issues.

"We are making progress down the road of negotiations. I don't believe the problem in the politics of Sri Lanka can be resolved in one single meeting," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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