

Malaysia-Myanmar Bilateral Trade Expected To Breach RM 3 Billion By Year-End
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KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 26 (Bernama) -- Bilateral trade between Malaysia and Myanmar is expected to breach RM3 billion, by year-end, driven by the enormous economic growth being recorded by both countries.

Deputy Chief Executive Officer of the Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (Matrade), Datuk Kamarudin Hassan said further economic liberalisation efforts undertaken by the Myanmar government, will significantly spur the export of Malaysian goods to that country.

"Going by past growth records, I am optimistic that the RM3 billion is within reach, this year," he told reporters on the sidelines of a Myanmar investment seminar, here today.

The movement of goods and services between Malaysia and Myanmar was valued at RM2.74 billion last year.

Malaysia's exports recorded a 27.3 per cent jump to register RM2.17 billion, while imports stood at RM0.57 billion.

On investments, Kamarudin said Malaysian companies should be more aggressive in taking advantage of the enormous level of opportunities being dished out in Myanmar, and in line with the nation's latest objective of broadening its economy and increasing foreign participation.

"Myanmar needs a high amount of infrastructure development. This involves the construction of roads, highways, airports and other commercial buildings.

"This is where Malaysian companies can create a niche for themselves, as we have some of the best infrastructure developers in Malaysia," he added.

Last year, Malaysian investment in Myanmar amounted to RM3.18 billion, and mostly in the area of oil and gas, hotels, plastics and seafood.

Among the major Malaysian companies in Myanmar are Labuan Re, Lumber Mart Sdn Bhd, Petroliam Nasional Bhd (Petronas), Sapura Crest Petroleum Sdn Bhd, Scansia Sdn Bhd and UMW Holdings Bhd.

Kamarudin said Malaysian companies must be unafraid of entering a an economy that is just starting to open up, such as Myanmar, as the country has laid out a clear investment law and policy, to woo the greater involvement of foreign investors.

He said through a better understanding of the investment law of Myanmar, Malaysian companies will be able to make better decisions in undertaking investment activities in Myanmar.

The Myanmar Foreign Investment Law was issued on Nov 2, 2012.

Among the interesting points of the new law is that foreign entities are allowed to invest 100 per cent and also permitted to perform joint-ventures with the government or private

Myanmar firms.

Meanwhile, the Marketing Representative of Matrade Yangon, M.T. Rajah said Malaysian goods are highly perceived by Myanmar citizens, as quality and high-technology products.

"Thus, more Malaysian companies should explore Myanmar. This is the right time as Myanmar's big local markets are not saturated yet and there are lack of industries.

"In fact, Malaysian companies can be trigger industries in Myanmar and be the catalyst of growth," he added.

Rajah said other than construction, Malaysian companies should get involved in other economic sectors and industries, including manufacturing, services, power and mining.

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