

**Malaysian Investment In London On The Upswing - Najib
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From Hafizah Kamaruddin**

LONDON, July 3 (Bernama) -- Malaysian investment in UK has been on the upswing with companies, including government-linked firms, looking at investing in real estate and purchasing buildings in London.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said Malaysia, the second major investors in London, will be the major player in the real estate development in metropolitan city.

He said Mara was looking at a few London properties and EPF, flushed with funds, was looking for opportunities to invest here.

Even the quotas for Malaysians in the the Battersea Power Station's apartment project near here had been snapped up, and more Malaysians were buying the properties in the city, he said.

"This is good for the (British) economy," said Najib at the question and answer session with the British media after the official announcement of the 9th World Islamic Economic Forum (WIEF) at the Greater London Authority City Hall here Wednesday.

Also present were London Mayor Boris Johnson, WIEF Foundation chairman Tun Musa Hitam, British Minister of State for Trade and Investment Lord Green of Hurstpierpoint and Malaysia Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Anifah Aman.

Currently, Malaysia's biggest investment in UK is the redevelopment of the 8 billion (RM39.2 billion) power station.

It is owned by a consortium comprising the EPF, Sime Darby Bhd and SP Setia Bhd.

Najib said with the coming WIEF Forum in October, the first being held outside the Organisation of the Islamic Conference member countries, there will be more opportunities for discussions between both sides on business collaborations which would lead to quite a number of active business proposals.

Najib said the Islamic economy has been on the rise with the Islamic banking emerging from been an obscure sector to a trillion-dollar concern offering a full range of Islamic financial products and services.

"Halal, which most people associate with food, covers everything from pharmaceuticals and logistics to cosmetics and tourism. It is a US\$2.3 trillion market providing for more than 1.6 billion Muslims," he added.

He said the opportunities for London were clear, and that was one of the reasons why the forum will bring business and government leaders from both the Muslim and non-Muslim world to the country.

Najib said the forum will also discuss the role of women in business, how to help the cities meet the challenge of growth and the potentials for collaborations on technology and education.

It will also discuss the roles of the governments in promoting economic growth and the importance of moderation and tolerance within Islam, as well as in the wider world.

Meanwhile, Musa, in his welcoming speech, said the forum, titled "Changing World, New Relationships", will be held at ExCel, London's International Convention Centre.

Over 1,500 participants, including government leaders, captains of industries, academic scholars from 100 countries, were expected to attend, he said.

He said British Prime Minister David Cameron has confirmed his attendance and will be participating in the forum.

The forum, which hopes to bridge the Islamic and the non-Islamic world, will also discuss issues on health and education, women, youth and banking and finance.

Among the papers that will be presented are Promoting Transnational Education; Women in Corporate World; Global Health Challenges; and, Youth Unemployment and Apprenticeship.

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