



WARM WELCOME: Abdullah and South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun walking past students waving flags at the Blue House in Seoul yesterday. — APpic

KL and Seoul agree to free trade pact

BY LEONG SHEN-LI

SEOUL: Malaysia and South Korea have agreed to a free trade agreement to boost economic ties and enhance bilateral relations.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said such an agreement did not mean that both countries did not support the establishment of the Asean-South Korea free trade area.

He said both countries had identified several specific areas to enhance co-operation.

"We want the level of Korean investments in Malaysia to increase further and trade between the two of us stepped up," he said here during his three-day official visit.

Earlier, Abdullah held a two-hour closed-door meeting with South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun at the presidential palace known as Blue House.

On other matters, Abdullah said South Korea had agreed to further develop education, tourism and information and communication technology facilities.

"South Korea has agreed to give Malaysians more opportunities to enter its universities to study medicine, engineering and other courses," he said.

This would be the first time South Korea is opening up its universities to Malaysian students to study medicine and South Korea would look into creating a chair for Malay studies in

its universities.

Currently, Busan University and Hankuk University have a department of Malay studies.

Abdullah said South Korea agreed to help Malaysia develop its small and medium-sized enterprises through courses for Malaysian officials.

At a state banquet hosted by Roh, Abdullah said Malaysia would continue with its Look East Policy to provide the synergy to further strengthen relations.

"It may therefore be timely for us to discuss an upgrading in the contents to include new areas in capacity building in ICT, research and development as well as post-graduate education," he said.

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