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PRESS RELEASE

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Malaysia-Thailand trade and investment growing, says envoy

BANGKOK: Malaysia and Thailand continue to enjoy friendly and substantive relations in all aspects, with positive growth in bilateral trade, investment and tourism, said Malaysia's ambassador to Thailand Datuk Husni Zai Yaacob.

In his 52nd Merdeka Day message carried in the local media, Husni said exports for the first six months of 2009 amounted to US\$3.76 billion (RM13.3 billion) while imports were US\$3.235 billion.

Malaysia's exports to Thailand in 2008 stood at US\$9.5 billion while imports were US\$8.9 billion. Husni said statistics from the Board of Investment (BOI) Thailand showed that approved investment from Malaysia into the kingdom recorded an increase of 118 %, from 11.5 billion baht in 2007 (RM1.2 billion) to 25.2 billion baht last year.

Malaysia, the fourth largest investor in Thailand and the second among Asean countries after Singapore, had investments worth 854 million baht approved in the first six months of 2009.

Among Malaysia's top investors in Thailand are Aapico Hitech, Bina Puri, Petroliam Nasional Bhd (Petronas), CIMB, Proton, Sime Darby, Kurnia Insurance, RHB and Morakot Industries.

To mark the Merdeka Day, the embassy organised a reception last night for Thai government officials, the diplomatic corps and Malaysian expatriates here.

Husni also said that besides the increasing exchange of visits between leaders and officials from both countries, the people-to-people contacts were also encouraging.

Thailand is the third largest group to visit Malaysia, with the figures increasing by 15%, from 1.13 million in 2007 to more than 1.33 million in 2008, while Malaysians remained the biggest group visiting the kingdom as 1.8 million came last year compared to 1.54 million a year before.

Husni said the state visit of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Mizan Zainal Abidin last March was timely and augured well for the dynamism of the bilateral ties between the two countries. "The visit was the first in nine years and, without a doubt, it reflected the importance of Thailand to Malaysia and the substantive relations enjoyed by the two neighbouring countries," he said. — *Bernama*

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