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Canada looks to Indonesia amid global downturn

Ary Hermawan , The Jakarta Post , Jakarta | Tue, 06/30/2009 10:40 PM | World

One of the silver linings of the global economic downturn is the fresh attention given by developed nations to emerging economies, particularly Indonesia, which has proven to be remarkably resilient to the crisis.

Outgoing Canadian Ambassador to Indonesia, John T. Holmes, told The Jakarta Post at his office recently that more Canadian companies have begun to look to Indonesia to explore its market potential as the world economy continues to struggle and, "things are not so good" in the United States, Canada's main trading partner.

"We recognize that we have to expand our market and look elsewhere."

"Despite the downturn, we are seeing a modest increase in Canadian business interests in the Indonesian market," he said.

While still expecting a slowdown, Holmes said he was upbeat trade relations between the two countries were strong enough to weather the crisis. And this, he said, is the embassy's prime achievement under his three year leadership.

Holmes explains the lack of legal certainties in Indonesia have long eclipsed the country's potential and been a major hindrance to foreign investment, a challenge that he has tried to overcome in order to draw investors from his home country.

The Canadian embassy, he said, is currently holding talks with Indonesian authorities to form a joint commission to protect investors.

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