

04 JUN 1996

MALAYSIA AND LAOS ESTABLISH JOINT COMMISSION

KUALA LUMPUR, June 4 (Bernama) -- Malaysia and Laos today signed a memorandum of understanding to formally establish a joint commission to further enhance trade and economic relations.

It was signed by Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and his Laotian counterpart Somsavat Lengsavat who later led their respective delegations at the first ministerial meeting of the commission.

Senior officials of the two countries had met yesterday to prepare the groundwork for the meeting.

Abdullah said contacts and exchanges of visits between leaders and government officials of both sides were on the increase.

Malaysia also welcomed Laos' economic reforms and open-door policies to transform the Laotian economy from centrally-planned to market-oriented which have brought positive results and made Laos attractive for foreign investment.

Somsavat hoped the meeting will further enhance cooperation and assist Laos in its preparation to join Asean next year.

He thanked Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for his initiative on the Mekong Basin development which will benefit Laos. --  
BERNAMA

RAZ CTL