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PM-Dollah

MALAYSIA TO UNDERTAKE KYRGYZ DEVELOPMENT CASE STUDY

By: Rachman Nordin

BISHKEK, July 16 (Bernama) -- Malaysia will undertake and finance a case study of all aspects of the Kyrgyz Republic to help identify areas for long term bilateral cooperation.

Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad proposed the case study when he met Kyrgyz President Askar Akayev on the second day of his official visit here.

"President Akayev welcomed the proposal as a significant contribution Malaysia can make and from which the Kyrgyz Republic can benefit in many ways," Abdullah said at a joint news conference with his Kyrgyz counterpart Madam Rosa Otunbayeva.

He said the case study, which will be at a government-to-government level, is the first such offer made by Dr Mahathir to any country.

Discussions on the study will start immediately on Dr Mahathir's return to Kuala Lumpur after his current official visits to Kyrgyz and Kazakhstan this week.

The proposed study will incorporate aspects of the Kyrgyz Republic's political, administrative and legal systems, economic potentials and other aspects of development.

"Dr Mahathir feels that considering the size of the Kyrgyz Republic and the size of its population, such a study should certainly be undertaken," he said.

Abdullah said Dr Mahathir felt such a study, undertaken with the view of Kyrgyz using Malaysia as a model for its development efforts, would also serve to prove that Malaysia's success in development was not accidental but elaborately planned.

On his part, Akayev believed that such a study would pave the way to make the expected expansion of bilateral ties a reality, Abdullah said.

Replying to a question, Abdullah acknowledged that eventually the Malaysian private sector would also be involved in the study and that collaboration between Malaysia's Economic Planning Unit and its Kyrgyz counterpart agency would be comprehensive.

"The scope of cooperation between them will be more organised and Malaysia's role in Kyrgyz's development efforts will be more defined and assured," Abdullah said.

He said the highlight of the meeting between Dr Mahathir and Akayev was their signing of a joint declaration which underlined the importance of current Malaysia-Kyrgyz bilateral relations and future ties.

The two leaders also identified four areas of cooperation -- mining, tourism, manufacturing, and agriculture and food processing.

In the afternoon, Dr Mahathir received an honorary professorship conferred by the Kyrgyz State University and later toured the republic's Cardiology Centre, Museum of Fine Arts and the Manastyn Aiyuli historical complex. -- BERNAMA

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