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Dr M watches signing of MoU linking MSC, Infopark

Rashif Yusof in Budapest

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who began a two-day working visit to Hungary yesterday, witnessed the signing of a memorandum of understanding which will pave the way for links between the Multimedia Super Corridor and Hungary's Infopark RT.

The signing, at the Parliament Building overlooking the Danube River, followed a Malaysian-Hungarian delegation meeting and talks between Dr Mahathir and Gyule Horn, the Hungarian Prime Minister.

Horn also witnessed the signing by Multimedia Development Corporation executive-chairman Tan Sri Dr Othman Yeop Abdullah and Imre Grof of Infopark.

Officials said MSC and information technology were very much on the agenda of Dr Mahathir's visit, along with tourism, Hungary's privatisation programme, and possibility of Malaysian students undergoing post-graduate courses here.

Today, the Prime Minister will address Hungarian businessmen on the MSC.

MDC, the company overseeing MSC development, said the tie-up with Infopark would enable MSC to link up with other technology hubs in Europe, and to tap Hungary's human resource prowess.

It was understandable why Malaysia was keen to tie up with Hungary.

"Hungary is a small country with a population of 10.2 million," said Othman, "but it has produced eight Nobel Prize winners and it can mobilise 1,000 engineers in two months."

He said with the tie-up, MSC now has links with similar hubs in Asia, Europe and the United States.

The MoU established the platform for exchanging information, identify business opportunities for both projects and introduced educational links and exchange programmes.

The Infopark will carry out R&D and be Hungary's centre for the development of new technologies.

Infopark is more modest in size compared to MSC, covering a 14ha site within Budapest Institute of Technology which is developing it jointly with the University of Budapest.

According to the Hungarians, they have developed the most advanced technology in finger-printing identification for multi-purpose card, Othman said.

The co-operation idea was proposed by the Hungarians who were technologically advanced, with an impressive personal computer penetration of 600,000.

"I think they want to build bridges," he said, "with the most exciting partner in the globe in terms of economic growth."

Dr Mahathir is accompanied by his wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, ministers, senior Government officers and a delegation of businessmen.

Among those in the delegation are Culture, Arts, and Tourism Minister Datuk Sabbaruddin Chik, Science, Technology and Environment Minister Datuk Law Hieng Ding, Deputy Foreign Minister Datuk Dr Leo Michael Toyad and Deputy International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Kerk Choo Ting.

The business delegation is led by Tan Sri Vincent Tan of Berjaya Group.

Yesterday, Dr Mahathir opened the International Commercial Bank, in which Malaysian investors hold a 60 per cent stake.

Last night, Dr Mahathir and Dr Siti Hasmah attended a dinner hosted by

Horn and his wife, Anna.

Today, Dr Mahathir is expected to visit the Videoton Holding, and Ikarus Vehicle Manufacturing Holdings in Szekesfehervar.

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