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King: We'll work with Macedonia

THE Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Ja'afar said that Malaysia was prepared to cooperate with Macedonia to maintain peace and security in the Balkan state.

He said it is regrettable that the Serb leaders in Belgrade are still plotting to stage demonstrations and create unrest in the former Yugoslavia including Macedonia.

"Malaysia hopes Macedonia and other countries will be able to convince the Serbian leaders to live in harmony and peacefully with their neighbours," the King said when speaking at the state banquet in honour of the visiting Macedonian President Kiro Gligorov at Istana Negara in Kuala Lumpur last night.

On economic ties between the two countries, the King said the private sector in Malaysia could venture into the telecommunications, power generation, transportation and tourism sectors in Macedonia.

Cooperation in these sectors would not only boost ties between Malaysia and Macedonia but also other neighbouring countries in the Balkan region, the King added. - Bernama

OUR REPORTER reports: Earlier yesterday Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his wife Datin Seri Siti Hamah Mohd Ali also called on Gligorov in Kuala Lumpur.

Gligorov and his wife, Nada, are in the federal capital on a four-day official visit.

Gligorov is leading a 46-member delegation comprising several ministers, senior government officials and businessmen to boost political, economic and trade ties between the two countries.

Gligorov and his entourage were accorded an official welcome at the Parliament Square.

The visiting Macedonian President later inspected a guard of honour mounted by five officers and 31 men from the 1st Battalion Royal Malay Regiment, under the command of Mej Hamdi Abdul Rahman.

On arrival at the Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport in Subang, he was received by Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, his wife Datin Seri Endon Mahmood and Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Sabbaruddin Chik who is the minister-in-attendance.

Today, Gligorov will hold talks with Dr Mahathir and attend a luncheon hosted by the National Chamber of Commerce and Industry Malaysia.

Malaysia was the first among the Asia-Pacific countries to recognise the Macedonia in 1992 following its emergence as a free and independent state.

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