

23 JUN 1997

Mahathir-Multimedia

MALAYSIA-HUNGARY TIE-UP IN MULTIMEDIA

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BUDAPEST, June 23 (Bernama) -- A new link in multimedia technology between Malaysia and Hungary was forged in a memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed here Monday between Malaysia's Multimedia Development Corporation (MDC) and Infopark RT, its Hungarian equivalent, in the presence of the prime ministers of both countries.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who flew in this morning from London on a two-day working visit, met his Hungarian counterpart Gyula Horn for the second time in three months amid signs of a strengthening cultural relationship between the two countries.

Horn was in Kuala Lumpur on an official visit in April this year.

The MoU, signed at Parliament House overlooking the Danube river by MDC executive chairman Tan Sri Dr Othman Yeop Abdullah and Imre Grof for Infopark, was at Hungary's behest.

Dr Othman welcomed the MoU as providing a new opportunity for Malaysia's Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) to link up with a European hub in the fast developing area of multimedia development.

The MoU is expected to lead to the establishment of a platform for cooperation through information exchange, identification of business opportunities and projects.

Hungary and Malaysia will also establish links in educational and exchange programmes.

With a population of just over 10 million, Hungary, with eight Nobel Prize winners, has a higher average ratio of general population and a vast skilled manpower resource.

The Infopark, a relatively smaller project of 140,000 sq metre site on the campus of the Budapest Institute of Technology compared with Malaysia's MSC which is spread over an area of one 750 sq kilometres, was established as Hungary's first major platform for research and development (R&D) for local as well as foreign companies to bring about innovative and leading edge technologies here.

"The wealth of Hungary is in its human resource. Besides having more than eight Nobel Prize winners, it is able to mobilise more than 1,000 engineers in two months. Based on this strength we will be able to tap an area of rich human resource," Dr Othman said.

In a further move to enhance its Information Technology (IT) capabilities, plans are afoot here to establish a special institute at the Eotvas Lorand University (ELTE) while retaining Infopark as an R&D centre.

"Cooperation between Malaysia and Hungary would provide a window for us into the research carried out by MSC experts here," Dr Othman said.

He added: "The Hungarians regard the MSC as a unique and most innovative effort in the world. If they are in contact with us, they will, to some extent, market their Infopark to the multimedia companies that come to the MSC."

Hungary is also keen to adopt the MSC, Malaysia's multimedia hub, as a model for its own development especially in the areas of flagship applications and cyberlaws.

The MSC has targeted seven flagship multimedia applications to catalyse its growth -- electronic government, smart schools, telemedicine, R&D clusters, national multipurpose card, borderless marketing centres and worldwide manufacturing webs.

Dr Othman said that far from this being a threat to the MSC, Infopark

would provide Malaysia with a strategic alliance with an innovative centre for IT research.

"Further to this, it is possible that within the next couple of years, we will be linking with some other hubs. We will use this as a platform," he said.

Dr Othman also outlined plans for the recruitment of Hungarian experts for research works with "some of the enterprises working within the MSC".

Besides wanting to use the MSC experience as a model for its own development, Hungary will also like to attract Malaysian entrepreneurs who could invest in the Inforpark.

"I have a feeling that they want to have a link with the most exciting part of the globe in terms of economic growth," he said. -- BERNAMA

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