

07 OCT 1997

Consortium

MALAYSIA, UZBEKISTAN TO FORM CONSORTIUM TO BUILD ROAD

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 7 (Bernama) -- Malaysia and Uzbekistan have agreed in principle to form a consortium to build a 3,500km road linking the east and west of the former Soviet Union bloc country.

Uzbekistan Deputy Prime Minister Victor Chjen said the setting up of the consortium was proposed to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir when he met the Malaysian leader at his office today.

Chjen, who arrived on Sunday for a three-day official visit to Malaysia, said setting up of the consortium for the multi-million dollar road project was among the six major issues he discussed with Dr Mahathir.

Besides agreeing to the proposal, Dr Mahathir also suggested that a rail road be built alongside with the road," he told a news conference at the end of his visit.

Asked for details of the consortium, Chjen said it was still premature as studies need to be carried out.

He said he discussed at length with Dr Mahathir on how both countries could expand their trade relations particularly on Malaysia's exports to his country.

Uzbekistan also offered its scientists and skilled manpower to assist Malaysia in scientific research.

Chjen, who described his visit as significant and educational, hoped to implement some of Malaysia's technology back home.

He said he was attracted to the building of townships such as Shah Alam and investment bodies like Permodalan Nasional Berhad (PNB) and hoped to implement similar projects in Uzbekistan.

Asked whether the weakening of the Ringgit would affect Malaysia's trade and investments in his country, Chjen, who is an economist, engineer and scientist, said he believed the ringgit's depreciation was only a temporary setback.

He was confident that Malaysia could overcome the problem soon.

After the news conference, Chjen witnessed the signing of two Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) between Superior Communications (M) Sdn Bhd and The State Committee for Property Management and Entrepreneurship Support and between Uzmacom Joint Stock Company and Binariang Communications Sdn Bhd. -- BERNAMA

SJA TS