

13/04/1998

Kazakhstan mission to tell of investment opportunities

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ONE year after setting up an embassy in Malaysia, the Republic of Kazakhstan is "going public" via a seminar tomorrow at the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations in Jalan Elmu, Kuala Lumpur.

The seminar, which will start at 10am, will highlight all there is to know about the former Soviet Union state which obtained sovereignty in December 1991.

Kazakhstan ambassador Amankeldi Zhumabayev said the seminar will enlighten Malaysians on the republic's current economic and political policies and investment opportunities.

Zhumabayev said the head of the European Desk from Wisma Putra, Datuk M. Santhananaban, would also be present to give a speech on Malaysia-Kazakhstan diplomatic relations.

He said this during a dinner for the Press held at the J.W. Marriott Hotel recently.

He said ambassadors from other countries like Turkey, Russia, Italy, Croatia and Sudan would also be at the seminar, organised by the embassy with the co-operation of the institute.

The Republic of Kazakhstan Embassy was established in Kuala Lumpur in February last year. Kazakhstan is the second country from the former Soviet Union to establish its embassy in Kuala Lumpur after Russia. The Kazakhstan embassy in Kuala Lumpur is the only one in Southeast Asia.

"Diplomatic relations with Malaysia was established in July 1996 with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's visit to the then capital of Kazakhstan, Almaty, to meet our president Nursultan Nazarbayev," Zhumabayev said. The present capital is Akmola.

Zhumabayev said his country's main exports were oil, gas and minerals.

"Ninety of the elements in the periodic table can be found in our country and 70 of them are mined," he said.

He said the country's two per cent growth rate was expected to increase to five per cent in two years.

Covering an area five times bigger than France, Kazakhstan is the ninth biggest country in the world. The population, however, is only 17 million.

Zhumabayev said the small population was made up of 131 ethnic groups.

"Kazakhs and Russians form the biggest groups with 52 and 30 per cent respectively," he said, adding that 65 per cent of its people were Muslims while the rest were Christians and Buddhists.

Being a landlocked country, Kazakhstan is accessible via air and railway.

"Before 1991, Kazakhstan was accessible via Russia, but now there are railway networks connecting the country with the Persian Gulf and China," he said.

To date, the flagship carrier Kazakh Air only flies to Bangkok but Zhumabayev hoped that one day there would be direct flights from his country to Kuala Lumpur.

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