

06/08/2002

Kyrgyzstan carries out Dr M's Plan

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PUTRAJAYA, Mon. - Kyrgyzstan has embarked on a 10-year economic development plan, popularly known in the country as the Dr Mahathir Economic Development Plan.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said the plan, prepared by officials from the Economic Planning Unit, was based on Malaysia's economic development plan.

He said the plan had been approved by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad before it was submitted to Kyrgyz authorities.

He said Kyrgyzstan's visiting President Askar Akayev considered Malaysia a model for economic development, requesting Malaysian expertise in developing the Central Asian country.

"He was fascinated with the development in Malaysia, especially Putrajaya and Cyberjaya, viewing Malaysia as a leader among developing countries."

Syed Hamid was speaking to reporters after a meeting between Akayev and Dr Mahathir.

The two leaders later witnessed the signing of an agreement and two memorandums of understanding at the Prime Minister's office here today.

An MoU and an agreement were between Bank Negara and the National Bank of Kyrgyz, while the other MoU was between the statistics departments of both countries.

Dr Mahathir and Akayev discussed, among others, ways to improve bilateral relations and economic co-operation between the two countries at their two-hour meeting.

Syed Hamid said Akayev was particularly satisfied with the recently concluded Langkawi International Dialogue as it involved developing countries and encouraged smart partnership.

"Akayev requested Malaysia to continue training Kyrgyz officials under the Malaysian Technical Programme and enrol its students at our institutions of higher learning."

Syed Hamid said Dr Mahathir encouraged Malaysian businessmen to study the possibility of investing in Kyrgyzstan as the investment climate there was conducive.

He also announced the inaugural flight from Kuala Lumpur to Bishkek, capital of Kyrgyzstan, tomorrow.

The flight is a joint venture between KR International Airlines and Malaysia's Safuan Group.

Akayev also requested Malaysia's support in initiating a dialogue between the Organisation of Security and Cooperation of Europe and the Organisation of Islamic Conference.

"The dialogue is to foster better understanding between Islamic and European countries on issues relating to terrorism," he said, adding that a date for the dialogue would be decided soon.

Later, while hosting a dinner at Istana Negara for Akayev and his wife, Mairam, the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Tuanku Syed Putra Jamalullail said the Special Joint Economic Commission that met annually at alternate capitals bore testimony to the success of the collaboration between the two countries.

He said Malaysia and Kyrgyzstan had co-operated well at many international forums.

"We've faced many challenges ... including that of terrorism. We know

that your country, too, has been actively involved in the struggle against terrorism."