

05 AUG 2003

Agong-Russia

M'SIA REGARDS RUSSIA AS A CLOSE ALLY - AGONG

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 5 (Bernama) -- Malaysia regards Russia as a friend and a close ally and always cooperated with each other to enhance bilateral ties, Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Syed Putra Jamalullail said tonight.

He said the two governments have thrown a challenge and motivated their younger generation to work harder to ensure continuity in the excellence in various fields of cooperation that prevailed between Malaysia and Russia.

"By honouring the past and moulding a vision for our future, we've ensured that the relations between Malaysia and the Russian Federation will progress further.

"All these have given confidence to our future," he said when speaking at the state banquet he hosted in honour of visiting Russian President Vladimir Putin at Istana Negara.

Putin arrived in Malaysia yesterday for a two-day official visit at the invitation of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong.

Putin's visit is to reciprocate the one made by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to Russia in March last year.

Expressing his happiness and describing Putin's visit as reflecting the friendship and strong ties that existed between Kuala Lumpur and Moscow, the King said the visit, the first by a Russian President, mirrored the success of the Russian political and economic transformation process.

He congratulated Putin for introducing a long-term economic reformation since becoming Russian President in 1999.

The King also conveyed his condolences to Putin and the Russian people who became victims of a bomb attack at a rock concert in Moscow on July 8, forcing Putin's visit to Malaysia to be postponed, and another bomb blast at a military hospital in Mozdok near Chechnya on Friday.

Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin said since the establishment of diplomatic ties between Malaysia and Russia about 35 years ago, which was then known as Soviet Union, the bilateral ties between the two countries scaled greater heights.

The cooperation between both countries covered a wide scope, including aerospace industry, information and communications technology, defence and currently in medical and bio-technology science.

Total bilateral trade was on the rise as businessmen from Malaysia and Russia have started to interact and forge closer ties in various economic sectors, he said.

In education, the Yang di-Pertuan Agong said the presence of more than 400 Malaysian students in the various medical institutions in Russia not only enabled them to graduate as qualified doctors, but also open their eyes to the treasures of history and richness of the Russian culture.

He said the students have also promoted Malaysian multiracial traditions and cultures to the Russians.

"Malaysia is proud of its multiracial people with their diverse cultures, languages and religions. It is this uniqueness that serve as Malaysia's pillar of strength.

"My Government gave strong emphasis to peace and stability as it enabled the people from all strata of society to progress," he said.

The government's determination and coupled with the sound policies have placed Malaysia on the right footing in efforts to realise Malaysia's vision to emerge as a developed country by 2020, he added.

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