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Syed Hamid-Airline

MALAYSIA, THAILAND MAY INTRODUCE CHEAP AIRLINE SERVICE

LANGKAWI, July 27 (Bernama) -- Malaysia and Thailand have agreed to look into the need for cooperation in introducing a cheap airline service operating in the two countries to promote greater movement of people, goods and tourism, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said today.

He said the relevant ministries of Malaysia and Thailand would discuss further how the service could be introduced, like granting of limited fifth freedom of landing.

In this regard, he said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his Thai counterpart Thaksin Shinawatra also agreed that Malaysia and Thailand studied the possibility of going into a joint venture with Indonesia's aircraft industry, IPTN, to produce a regional jet.

He told this to reporters after bilateral talks between the two leaders in conjunction with Thaksin's two-day working visit to Langkawi.

"The IPTN has been closed down. But they want to revive the industry and have talked to us, and they are also going to discuss the matter with Thailand. We think if we come in we would like Thailand also to come in," he said.

Syed Hamid said the CN235 aircraft produced by IPTN was a good aircraft but the aircraft producer needed capital to revive the industry after the Indonesian government closed it down due to financial problems.

He said Thaksin's visit had been very successful and the two leaders had a fruitful discussion on strengthening closer trade and economic cooperation.

"Both leaders agreed there is a need for deeper and enhanced trade and economic relations, looking into the possibility of having joint visa and joint promotion of tourist destinations like Phuket and Langkawi," he said.

The two leaders concurred that both countries should act on an integrated basis and see that whatever Malaysia could give to Thailand should be reciprocated, said Syed Hamid.

"Reciprocity is the order of the day to enhance trade and economic cooperation, to concretise various matters that may be still outstanding including on the checkpoint and highway project," he said.

Syed Hamid said both Prime Ministers promised to resolve whatever differences the two countries might have in order to ensure smooth flow of goods, people and transportation as far as possible by October.

Elaborating on cooperation on the checkpoint, he said the two leaders discussed the issue of dual citizenship of Thai citizens especially those involved in criminal activities seeking refuge in Malaysia.

He said Malaysia did not recognise dual citizenship and had requested Thailand to provide the list of names of criminals suspected of hiding out in Malaysia.

On the gas pipeline project linking Thailand and Malaysia, Syed Hamid said the project was going on smoothly and local protests in Southern Thailand were a normal thing and not obstructing its implementation.

-- BERNAMA

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