

Asian Cooperation Dialogue begins today

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By Ahmad Fairuz Othman

KUWAIT: The push for a global movement of moderates and adding value to the e-education top the agenda of the Malaysian delegation to the inaugural Asian Cooperation Dialogue Summit beginning today.

Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, who is leading the delegation, will focus on these areas during the gathering involving representatives from 32 member nations. The summit takes place at the Tariq Convention Centre within the compound of Kuwait's Bayan Palace.

The grouping, known as the ACD, had previously functioned as a ministerial dialogue for the past 10 years before it was upgraded to a full summit involving representatives of heads of government. The Thai-initiated ACD held its first ministerial dialogue in Cha-Am, Thailand, in 2002.

It was aimed to consolidate Asian strengths and fortify the region's competitiveness by maximising on its diversity and rich resources.

The grouping boasts includes all 10 members of the Association of South East Asian Nations Asean, the economic powerhouses of Japan, China, India and Arab-speaking nations of Iran, Saudi Arabia, Oman and Qatar, and Russia and its former colonies of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. The latest entry into this grouping is Afghanistan.

Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Senator A. Kohilan Pillay, who is part of the Malaysian delegation, said the country had benefited from the informal grouping by obtaining ideas and views that were Asian-centric.

He said currently there are were 20 projects conducted by the summit's prime movers and Malaysia is was involved in three projects - e-education, e-commerce and an infrastructure fund.

"Each member nation voluntarily chooses the projects, and this allows each nation to focus on one or a few projects ranging from environment conservation and food to energy matters." , " he told reporters said. prior to the start of the summit.

Kohilan, who has attended two previous ACD ministerial meets, said the Malaysian delegation had proposed for the concept of the Global Movement of Moderates, which was formally started by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, be adopted among member nations.

"We will look at projects related to the moderation concept and use them as an informal platform to practice practise it. We will do it as long as member nations could can benefit."

On e-education, Kohilan said discussions were heading towards setting up a credit transfer system among member nations who took up online learning courses under the Asia e University.

“As education minister, the deputy prime minister will also table proposals to add value and other ideas in the field of e-education.”

Meanwhile, Malaysian ambassador to Kuwait Datuk Adnan Othman said the Kuwaiti Amir Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah would officiate at the two-day summit.

He said besides Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad’s keynote address, other leaders expected to speak include Thai Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra, who is the summit coordinator. will speak at the summit.

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