



**TALKING POINTS FOR:
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MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION OF MALAYSIA**

**FOR:
PRESS CONFERENCE OF
THE 2ND MEETING OF THE JOINT RUSSIA-MALAYSIA COMMISSION
FOR ECONOMIC, SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL, AND CULTURAL
COOPERATION**

**DATE:
9 NOVEMBER 2023**

**VENUE:
UTM HOTEL & RESIDENCE KUALA LUMPUR**

1. Members of the media. Ladies and gentlemen.
2. On behalf of the Government of Malaysia, we welcome all the Russian delegates to the 2nd Meeting of the Joint Russia-Malaysia Commission for Economic, Scientific, Technical, and Cultural Cooperation (JCESTC).
3. Today, I have co-chaired the 2nd Meeting of the JCESTC held from 8th to 10th November 2023, with my counterpart from the Russian Federation, H.E. Valery Falkov, Minister of Science and Higher Education.
4. Malaysia and Russia cemented the agreement to set up JCESTC in November 2015. Its first meeting took place in Moscow in October 2019, which gave a new pulse to the bilateral relations, further enhancing interactions between the countries.
5. As we witnessed today, the relationship between the two countries is strengthened. JCESTC is having its 2nd meeting with Malaysia as a host.
6. This meeting is crucial as it marks a pivotal moment in the enduring partnership between Malaysia and Russia. It is an essential platform for us to deliberate, strengthen and expand our cooperation in various fields.
7. During the meeting, I have emphasised two key takeaways:
8. Firstly, we must all ensure that we continue capitalising on the strengths of both countries to arrive at a strategic and mutually beneficial endeavour.
9. Secondly, we must share our experience, expertise and best practices, particularly in addressing challenges and uncertainties we may face in materialising our shared vision.

10. We are pleased to inform you that this meeting has reached a pinnacle in several significant agreements and discussions to enhance cooperation between the two nations, including education collaboration, bilateral documents and agreements, financial and banking cooperation, food security, and agricultural product access.
11. Earlier today, I also had a closed-door meeting with my counterpart, H.E. Valery Falkov, underlining the commitment of both nations to furthering cooperation in the field of education.
12. **Firstly, on Education Collaboration.**
13. The collaboration includes increasing the number of students in both countries, intensifying cooperation between scientific and educational organisations of Russia and Malaysia and promoting the Russian language in Malaysia and the Malay language in Russia.

A. *Increasing the number of Malaysian students in Russia and vice versa*

14. We applaud the Russian Federation's intention to allow talented international students to study in Russia through scholarship at all levels.
15. We are delighted that 20 Malaysian students have been selected for the scholarship programme for the year 2023.
16. Currently, the number of Malaysian students in Russia is 849 and Russian students in Malaysia 118.
17. We welcome any proposal from the Russian Federation to send their students to further their studies in Malaysia for both undergraduate/postgraduate programs and mobility programs.

B. *Intensifying cooperation between scientific and educational organisations between Russia and Malaysia*

18. Today, we also witnessed the signing of 8 MoUs involving both higher education institutions in Malaysia and Russia.
19. These MoUs include establishing mirror labs, student mobility, satellite labs, double/dual degrees, matching grants, joint academic and research programs, enhancement of learning curricula, training and technology transfer.
20. Today, we witnessed the launching of a mirror lab between the National Research University Higher School of Economics (HSE) St Petersburg and Azman Hashim International Business School (AHIBS) UTM.
21. We now have a Mirror Lab between The ACT Lab, AHIBS, UTM (Malaysia) and the Laboratory for Reputation Management in Education (RepLab), HSE (Russia), which involves studying and developing social entrepreneurship in two countries (Malaysia and Russia) through a cross-country analysis.

C. *Promoting the Malaysian language in Russia and vice versa*

22. The education collaboration also includes promoting the Malaysian language in Russia and vice versa. The Malay language is used as the medium of communication in several conferences and seminars in Moscow and St Petersburg.
23. Intensive study of the Malay language and the publication of large Malay-Russian dictionaries allowed Russian specialists to begin active work on translating Malay classical literature.
24. Several public universities in Malaysia already offering Russian language programs (beginner and elementary Russian courses), namely at the National Defence University of Malaysia (UPNM) and the University of Malaya (UM).

25. **This education cooperation will expand educational opportunities and promote cultural exchange and language learning, emphasising promoting the Russian language in Malaysia and the Malay language in Russia.**
26. **Secondly, Intensifying works on Bilateral Documents and Agreements.**
 27. To further strengthen the bilateral relationship, Russia and Malaysia are working on various agreements, particularly on the MoU in higher education and an agreement on mutual recognition of education, qualifications, and academic degrees.
 - (a) MOHE has agreed to proceed with the negotiations and conclude a full-fledged intergovernmental agreement on cooperation in higher education;
 - (b) MOHE has agreed to recognise all degrees granted by the Russian Federation's relevant authorities or the Federal Service for Supervision of Education and Science. Nonetheless, the recognition of professional programs such as in the fields of Medicine, Dental, Pharmacy, Nursing, Engineering, and Architecture are subjected to acceptance by the relevant professional bodies in Malaysia; and
 - (c) The Government of Malaysia has granted visa-free entry facilities to The Russian Federation citizens who hold Diplomatic, Official and Common Passports with a 30-day citizenship qualification. To study or work, Russian Federation citizens must obtain a Visa with a Reference (VDR) approval letter and apply for eVISA to enter Malaysia.
 28. These agreements will facilitate more accessible travel and enhance educational exchanges.

29. At the same time, the Civil Aviation Authority of Malaysia (CAAM) is also reviewing an MoU regarding airworthiness-related matters with the Federal Air Transport Agency of the Russian Federation (FATA).
30. **Thirdly, on Financial and Banking Cooperation.**
31. Russia and Malaysia have welcomed the idea of fostering financial and banking cooperation, especially in Islamic banking and finance, to strengthen economic ties and promote investment opportunities between the two countries. This partnership is poised to create a conducive environment for trade and commerce.
32. **Fourthly, Food Security and Agricultural Products Access.**
33. The Commission's discussions highlighted Russia and Malaysia's mutual interest in the food security sector. The nations will look into prospects to discuss each other's agricultural products further, thus looking at the possibility of exchanging high-quality goods.
34. The future collaboration on the recognition of Russian Halal certification bodies by JAKIM will be an optimistically notable achievement in this context, which will promote trust and facilitate trade.

Conclusion

35. The 2nd Meeting of the JCESTC signifies the deepening of the solid and friendly relations between Russia and Malaysia.
36. The agreements reached during this meeting lay the foundation for enhanced collaboration in various sectors, including finance, agriculture, education, and mutual recognition of qualifications.
37. Let us continue to explore new avenues for cooperation, create opportunities for our business communities, and facilitate the exchange of knowledge and technology that will drive our economies forward.

Both nations look forward to the continued growth of this dynamic partnership, which promises to bring substantial benefits to the people and economies of Russia and Malaysia.