

## Eldor Aripov outlined promising areas of cooperation with Malaysia



On January 21 this year, in Kuala Lumpur, the delegation of Uzbekistan headed by the Director of the Institute for Strategic and Regional Studies under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan (ISRS) Eldor Aripov took part in a round table on the topic: “From Dialogue to Action: Uzbekistan and Malaysia on the Path to Strategic Cooperation”.

The event was organized with the assistance of the Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan in Kuala Lumpur, jointly with the Institute of Strategic and International Studies of Malaysia (ISIS), which is the country's leading think tank.

At the round table, the Malaysian side was represented by the Friendship Group of the Parliament of Malaysia, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Institute of Public Administration, the Institute of Diplomacy and International Relations, the Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute, Institute of Islam Hadhari, and the Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism.

The Uzbek side was represented by experts from the Institute for Macroeconomic and Regional Studies, the Development Strategy Center, the Imam Maturidi International Scientific Research Center, the Ministries of Finance and Economy, Higher Education, Science and Innovation, and Agriculture.

The main agenda of the event was to discuss the current state and future prospects for the development of cooperation between Uzbekistan and Malaysia, including issues of strengthening strategic partnership in the field of politics and security, industrial cooperation, innovation and technology, as well as in the field of education, science and culture.



In his welcoming speech, ISRS Director Eldor Aripov emphasized that today Uzbek-Malaysian relations are experiencing a completely new dynamic.

According to the head of ISRS, trade and investment cooperation is rapidly developing. In recent years, the volume of bilateral trade has grown 2.5 times, and the number of joint ventures in Uzbekistan with the participation of Malaysian capital has increased to 37.

The head of the delegation expressed his firm belief that the visit of Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim to Uzbekistan in May last year gave a significant impetus to bilateral cooperation. As a result, high results were achieved.

In particular, a Joint Statement on deepening multifaceted cooperation was signed. An agreement was reached on the creation of the Uzbek-Malaysian Industrial Zone in Uzbekistan to promote high-tech projects. Following the Uzbek-Malaysian business forum, a solid package of 19 investment agreements worth over \$3 billion was signed.

Eldor Aripov placed special emphasis on expanding cooperation in the field of education and personnel training. Thus, within the framework of the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Program, more than 850 specialists from ministries and departments of Uzbekistan have improved their qualifications in Malaysia. Today, about 500 Uzbek students are receiving education at prestigious Malaysian universities. 25 cooperation agreements have been signed between educational institutions of the two countries.

This, according to the expert, characterizes the high dynamics of Uzbek-Malaysian cooperation.

At the same time, the potential of bilateral relations has not yet been fully realized. In this context, Eldor Aripov drew attention to the most promising areas of bilateral cooperation.

Firstly, the expert stressed the importance of developing industrial cooperation. According to him, the semiconductor industry of Malaysia, which provides about 25% of the country's GDP, is of particular interest to Uzbekistan.

In this regard, Malaysia's best practices in developing the semiconductor industry, including strategic planning, marketing, infrastructure development and specialist training, can be very useful for Uzbekistan.

Secondly, according to the ISRS Director, it seems relevant to expand cooperation in the field of education, mutual academic exchanges, and personnel training.

As the specialist specified, currently about 30 branches of various foreign universities are already operating in Uzbekistan. The country, acting as an "educational hub" of Central Asia, is interested in establishing cooperation with Malaysian universities in training personnel in such areas as energy, Islamic banking, ecology, artificial intelligence, "halal" industry, creative economy, etc.

Thirdly, this is strengthening cooperation on issues of combating religious extremism and terrorism. Today, Malaysia has accumulated unique experience in preventing and preventing the spread of religious extremist ideology among the population.

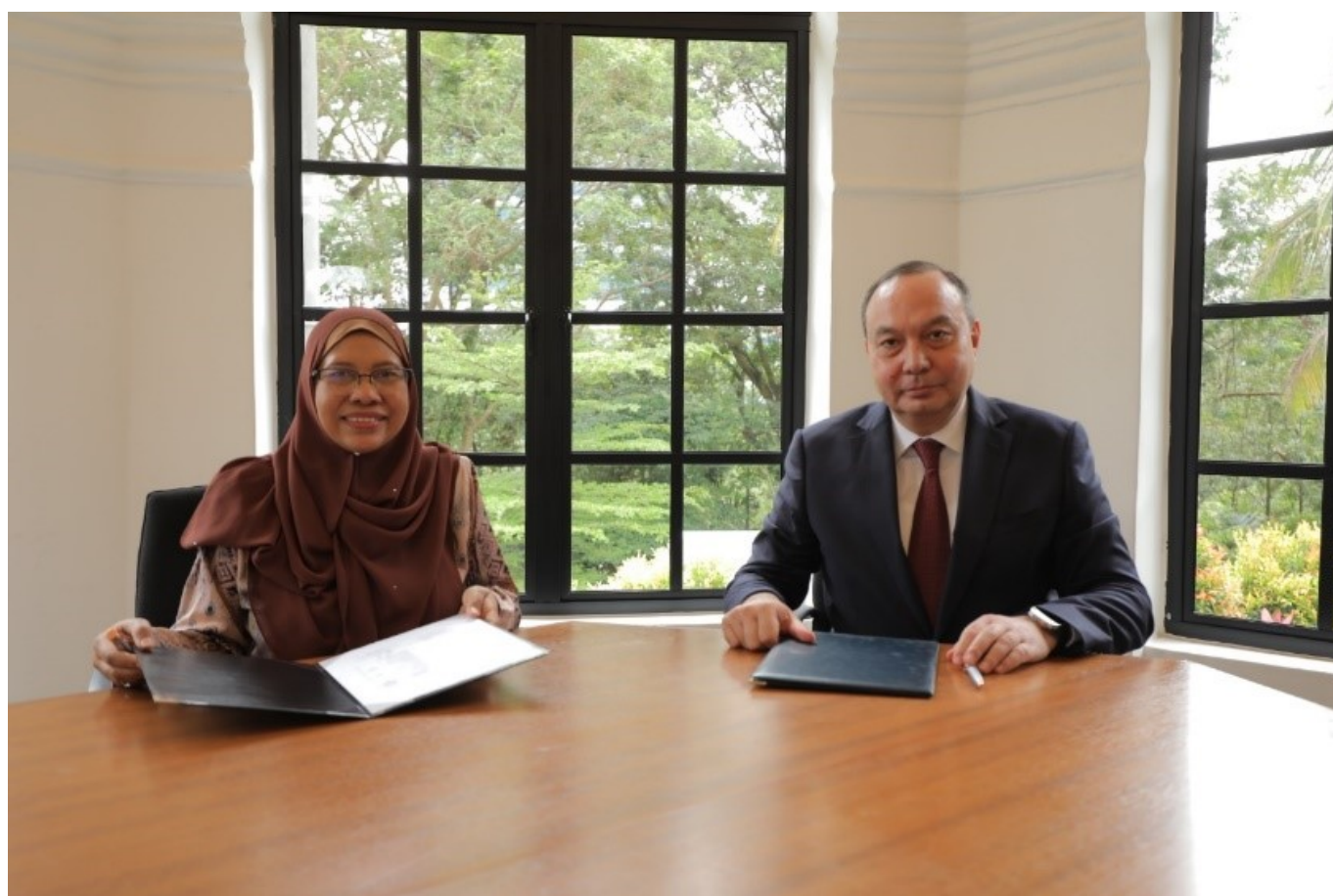
Uzbekistan, in turn, is also carrying out targeted work in this direction. At the initiative of the President of Uzbekistan, in May 2024, the Regional Expert Council in Central Asia on Rehabilitation and Reintegration began its work under the auspices of the UN Counter-Terrorism Office. In November and December 2024, presentations of the Council's activities were organized at the UN headquarters in Geneva and New York.

"Nevertheless, effective combating terrorism requires close coordination not only at the regional but also at the global level. In this context, one of the important areas of our cooperation could be the exchange of experience and best practices in the field of deradicalization and rehabilitation of citizens," said the ISRS director.

Fourthly, the expert believes it is advisable to create a dialogue platform in the format of "Central Asia + ASEAN". Eldor Aripov expressed confidence that interregional cooperation will allow for more effective resolution of issues in the sphere of trade and investment cooperation, industrial cooperation, transport and logistics, as well as consolidation of positions on current issues of regional and international development.

Fifthly, the ISRS representative is convinced that today expert dialogue plays an increasingly important role in strengthening bilateral cooperation. Against this background, it was proposed to consider launching a permanent expert platform between analytical and research centers of Malaysia and Uzbekistan.

"This step will allow us to conduct joint research on a regular basis, organize conferences and round tables devoted to the most pressing issues of mutual interest, and also provide expert and analytical support for meetings at the highest and high levels," concluded Eldor Aripov.



Following the round table, a Cooperation Plan for 2025 was signed between ISRS and ISIS, which provides for the establishment of partnership and regular working contacts between the analytical centers of the two countries.

*For information: ISIS was founded in April 1983 as an independent non-profit research organization. It conducts*

research in the field of foreign policy, security, economics, public administration, social policy, technology, innovation and the environment. It regularly participates in the preparation of conceptual documents of the country. The Institute's experts took part in the development of the Vision 2020 strategy of the Master Plan for the Economy initiative, the Malaysia Madani concept. In 2018, a Memorandum was signed between ISRS and ISIS.

