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Khabarovsk keen on establishing closer ties

KHABAROVSK, a far-eastern territory of Russia, is keen on strengthening bilateral ties with Malaysia in the timber and manufacturing industries.

Its governor Victor Ishaev said this yesterday after leading a five-member delegation to a meeting with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Ishaev, who is here to attend the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation summit, said Russia's membership in Apec would give Khabarovsk a lead in establishing ties within the Asia Pacific rim.

This, he added, was because of Khabarovsk's location.

Ishaev said his meeting with Dr Mahathir generated the possibility for the co-operation in the manufacture of Sohoi 27 war planes by Khabarovsk for Malaysia, as well as in ship and patrol boat manufacturing.

Currently, Russian-made KA32 helicopters are utilised in logging activities in Sarawak.

Ishaev also said his Government was currently collaborating with Malaysian company Rimbunan Hijau to fell mature timber in Khabarovsk.

Rimbunan Hijau International Co Ltd general director Tiong Hock Chai, who was also present, said that with about one year of preparations almost complete, full-scale operations aimed at exporting plywood to Japan, Korea and China, would begin early next year.

One of Russia's 13 far-eastern territories, Khabarovsk covers some 788,000 square kilometres with a population of about two million.

It boasts of a storehouse of natural resources: some 15 billion tonnes of coal, 13 billion metric tonnes of oil, 25 million cubic metres of timber and 14 trillion cubic metres of natural gas.

Experiencing doubled turnover in foreign trade over the past five years, Khabarovsk's last year yielded some US\$5.6 billion (RM21.3 billion).

Ishaev's delegation includes Minister of National Resources and Minerals Guennady Potcherevin, adviser to the Governor Vladimir Kuchuk, first protocol officer Gennady Kondratov and Khabarovsk adviser for Rimbunan Hijau Leonid Panchenko .

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