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Agong-Zhu

M'SIA-CHINA PULP AND PAPER MILL PROJECT IS ON

By: Ruhil Amani Zainal Abidin

BEIJING, April 25 (Bernama) - The joint-venture project between Malaysia and China to build a pulp and paper factory in Sabah will be implemented as soon as possible, a Malaysian Foreign Ministry spokesman said today.

He said Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji, in his meeting with Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah today, said he and his Malaysian counterpart Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad were agreed that the project would greatly benefit the two countries.

The RM4.3 billion pulp and paper factory will be built in Kalabakan, Tawau.

Sultan Salahuddin, who is into the second day of his state visit, met Zhu at his office in Zhonanghai here.

The 30-minute meeting was also attended by Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Dr Rais Yatim, who is the minister-in-attendance, and Malaysian Ambassador to China Datuk Abdul Majid Ahmad Khan.

The spokesman said Zhu also expressed confidence that ties between Malaysia and China would continue to improve.

China's Deputy Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Chinese Ambassador to Malaysia Guan Dengming were also present at the meeting.

Yesterday, the Agong called on Chinese President Jiang Zemin.

A local English newspaper, the China Daily, reported that during the meeting, Jiang described the development of bilateral ties since the establishment of diplomatic relations 27 years ago as "steady and sound".

The report said the Chinese president said the frequent exchange of visits between the leaders of the two countries has contributed to the increased understanding and friendship between China and Malaysia.

He spoke highly of the achievements made by Malaysia in handling the financial crisis and the country's economic recovery.

China and Malaysia have conducted exchanges and cooperation in cultural, educational, scientific and military fields.

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RAZ ES YBY