

Similarities good for trade, says governor

STAR 18 SEP 2002

By CELESTE FONG

KUALA LUMPUR: Similarities between China and Malaysia can lead to greater co-operation in trade, friendship and cultural exchanges, said Shandong province governor Zhang Gaoli yesterday.

"Due to the similarities, more people from Shandong will come to Malaysia and more Malaysians will visit Shandong to further enhance friendship," he said after visiting the Malaysian Chinese Cultural Society (MCCS) yesterday.

Zhang and his nine-member delegation arrived on Monday for a four-day visit.

Shandong, a coastal province in East China, is the birthplace of Confucius and Meng Zi, two philosophers who had a great influence on Chinese culture.

Zhang said Malaysia's investment in Shandong totalled US\$2bil (RM7.6bil) to date while other foreign investments in the province had reached US\$60bil between January and August this year.

"Shandong has a population of about 91 million, just slightly

behind Henan's 95 million," he said.

Zhang said he was impressed by the unique architecture of the Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA), saying it was a "good piece of construction work."

"Dr Mahathir is a great man whose good name and reputation are world known. I believe this is because of his contribution to his people and country.

"He is an important person with calibre," said Zhang of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad whom he would meet tomorrow.

His other meetings included that with millionaire businessman Tan Sri Robert Kuok Hock Nien, a discussion on the cooperation between Shandong and Malaysia and a visit to Jinan & Steel Group, a Malaysia-China joint venture, in Pahang.

Those in his delegation included Shandong Planning Committee director-general Ni Yongkang, Shandong Provincial Committee of Foreign Trade and Cooperation director-general Wang Chuntao, Shandong Foreign Affairs Office director-general Zhang Weiling.