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China keen to strengthen trade and industry ties with Malaysia

PUTRAJAYA, Mon. - China is keen to strengthen bilateral ties with Malaysia, especially in trade and industry, in the wake of the republic's entry into the World Trade Organisation.

Chinese Vice-Premier Li Lanqing, who met Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the Finance Ministry today, expressed hope that China and Malaysia could co-operate to create a win-win situation in trade and industry, in the context of the Asean+3 grouping.

"The meeting today focused on trade between China and the Southeast Asian region, but there is specific interest on the Chinese side to attract high-end investments from Malaysia," Deputy Foreign Minister Datuk Dr Leo Michael Toyad said.

"They are also looking into investing in Malaysia ...so this can result in a win-win situation for both nations."

Dr Toyad, who briefed the media after the meeting this morning, said Malaysia might venture into China's automotive industry as there had been an invitation for Malaysia's active participation in the sector.

It was reliably learnt that Proton might restart its abandoned "Venture into China" project, which did not take off due to certain shortcomings a few years ago.

"Proton was all ready to set up manufacturing plants in China but for the economic crisis and constraints due to investment procedures," a senior official of Proton confirmed.

Dr Toyad said discussions on Malaysia's entry into China's automotive sector were in the final stages. Trade between Kuala Lumpur and Beijing stood at US\$10 billion (RM38 billion) in 2001.