

Namibia, Malaysia vow to boost trade
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Namibian President Hifikepunye Pohamba and Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi agreed on Friday to strengthen economic ties and increase trade at a meeting in Windhoek.

"We intend to deepen our economic relations as trade between our countries is growing steadily," said Pohamba.

"We wish to encourage more investments from Malaysia in research, development and agriculture as well as mining, trade and information technologies.

The Malaysian leader said Kuala Lumpur was interested in construction and housing projects in the southern African country.

"We want to achieve a win-win cooperation and forge strategic alliances and facilitate new initiatives," he said.

Abdullah is in Namibia on the last leg of a three-nation African tour which has also taken him to Sudan and Kenya.

Textile factory biggest investment

Malaysia's largest investment in Namibia is the US\$100 million textile and garment factory Ramatex, which initially employed 6,000 people.

However poor work conditions led to strikes and the company reduced its staff by half.

Malaysia imports processed marble, precious stones for jewellery production and textiles from Namibia.

During a bilateral business forum attended by Badawi on Friday afternoon, Namibian Trade Minister Immanuel Ngatjizeko said: "Bilateral trade came to US\$30 million last year. We hope to increase that significantly this year."

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