

Putrajaya-Beijing to speed up trade
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By Ling Poh Lean

BEIJING: Malaysia and China have agreed to expedite the five year development programme between both countries by year end and had identified nine potential areas for cooperation.

The development programme was made possible after the Chinese premier Wen Jiabao visited Malaysia in April. The plan will be fully implemented in 2013.

Malaysia International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed said that Malaysian government will also be identifying one or two areas of cooperation which could be carried out in less than five years.

"Five years will probably be too long. So, we need to identify one or two areas out of the nine which we can start the cooperation with China immediately.

"One of the areas would probably be the halal industry" he added.

The nine areas were identified after Mustapa met with his Chinese counterpart Minister of Commerce of the People's Republic of China Chen Deming at the 9th Joint Economic and Trade Commission (JETC) here on Wednesday.

Among the nine identified areas of cooperation are mining, industrial park, manufacturing, agricultural, traditional Chinese medicine and halal industry.[]

During the closed-door meeting, both countries had also agreed to solve the bird's nest controversy as soon as possible.

"The Chinese government who understand the importance of the industry to Malaysia has agreed to look into it again and resolve the problem as soon as they can.

"He (Chen) has promised to talk to related agency about mutual agreed standard for bird's nest by both countries," Mustapa said after the meeting.

In July, China had imposed a temporary ban on the import of bird's nest from Malaysia after allegedly found that samples of the product contained 200 parts per million (ppm) of nitrate. The standard level allowed in food by the World Health Organisation is 34ppm.

Mustapa added that he will bring the issue to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak when he visits the 8th China-ASEAN Expo in Nanning on Friday.

"I will talk to our prime minister about the bird's nest issue so that he could bring the matter to Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao when he meets with the premier at the expo," he said.

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