

PM: Pandas symbol of strong Malaysia-China ties

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TRADE: China is an important source of investment, says Najib

PUTRAJAYA: THE two pandas to be loaned from China is an identifiable symbol of Malaysia's "robust, strong and friendly" relationship with the republic and will be very popular here.

In stating this, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said he had broached the idea of a possible loan of the pandas during a meeting with China's premier Wen Jiabao in April, and was delighted when Wen gave his consent immediately.

He explained that as the country's relationship with China had gone from strength to strength, with the republic being Malaysia's largest trading partner and an important source of future investment, he wanted a symbol that the people could identify with and could not think of a better one than that of a pair of pandas.

"The pandas are affable animals, appreciated not only by the Chinese but by the whole world, and their presence will certainly be a special attraction to Malaysians and visitors alike," he said, adding that they would add a new dimension to the attraction in the country's administrative capital and would generate income.

Najib said this after witnessing agreements signed between the two countries on several initiatives here yesterday.

Also signed were agreements for the Malaysia-China Kuantan Industrial Park and a letter of intent on an economic partnership between Kuantan and the Qinzhou municipal region.

Najib revealed that Malaysia Development Berhad would bear half the cost towards the construction of the facilities for the pandas at the Putrajaya Wetlands here.

He said the country would look forward to receiving the pandas once the necessary technical requirements had been met.

Apart from the pandas, Najib said the establishment of a sister industrial park in Malaysia following the successful launch of the Qinzhou Industrial Park (QIP) would also be a symbol of the growing economic and business ties between the two countries as well as a strong collaboration.

He had mooted the idea for a similar park here after attending QIP's launch in China in April.

Najib, who was impressed with the speedy implementation of the park in China, was optimistic that the physical implementation of the sister park in Kuantan could begin in near future.

The Natural Resources and Environment Ministry said the two pandas that would be loaned to Malaysia for a decade to mark 40 years of diplomatic ties with China, would be placed in an air-conditioned enclosure.

Five types of bamboo species will be planted to meet their dietary needs.

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