

Najib: Expand into the global halal industry

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KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian companies, including government-linked companies, should forge strategic partnerships with international corporations in the halal industry.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said the private sector should establish links with international brands of halal products as a way to fast-track their entry into the global halal market.

He said this could be done either through equity participation or acquisition of renowned brands.

"It is imperative we establish strategic alliances among industry players, both locally and overseas, to leverage on each other's strengths in the supply of raw materials, ingredients, technology, distribution networks and branding," he said at the opening of the Sixth Malaysian International Halal Showcase (MIHAS) 2009 and the Second World Halal Research Summit 2009 organised by the Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (Matrade).

Present were International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed and his two deputies, Datuk Mukhriz Mahathir and Datuk Jacob Dungau Sagan, Matrade chairman Tan Sri Halim Mohammad and Halal Industry Development Corporation chief executive officer Datuk Seri Jamil Bidin.

MIHAS 2009 saw participation from 29 countries and will be held daily from 10am to 7pm at Matrade until Sunday. It has targeted some 50,000 visitors.

Najib, who is also finance minister, urged the private sector to proactively seek new ways to expand into the halal industry to ensure the country's capacity to sup-



Datuk Seri Najib Razak sprinkling almond and hazelnuts on chocolate made by Fidani Chocolatier Sdn Bhd yesterday.

ply halal products and services.

He said nurturing closer relationships with the country's trading partners was critical and should not be overlooked.

"Malaysian companies should capitalise on the strong relations Malaysia has with the OIC countries, Africa and China. The opportunities in the halal sector of these countries are huge and should be explored to the fullest."

Najib said to facilitate the shift towards higher value-added activities in the halal industry, research and development was crucial.

He said research and development would assist in the formulation of religious edicts as well as support traceability and quality control in the industry.

In addition, research findings would also assist in identifying alternative ingredients, and in prod-

uct development and commercialisation of halal products and services.

He said Malaysia had a competitive edge in the development of the halal industry as it was a modern Islamic country with an open economy, well-developed infrastructure, strong manufacturing base and a supportive government.

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