

# Bird's nest protocol pending nod from China

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**PUTRAJAYA:** The government has written to China to allow import of bird's nest from Malaysia as per conditions stated in China's strict protocol imposed recently to address safety concerns.

Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Minister Datuk Seri Noh Omar said the protocol is pending the Chinese government's signature, which he said is just "ceremonial" as the Malaysian cabinet has accepted the protocol.

He said he will ensure that Malaysia's bird's nest fulfils the standards required and is of high quality.

He said the government was notified informally that there may not be any obstacle in exporting bird's nest if the traders have obtained certifications from the Health Ministry and a certificate of origin from the Veterinary Services Department.

"The certificate of origin is important because it traces the origins of the bird's nest through radio frequency to ensure that the edible bird's nest is authentic and safe for consumption," Noh Omar told a press

conference yesterday.

"The cabinet approved the protocol on July 11, and we have written to China but have not received any reply from them," he added. "Nevertheless, the traders can export their bird's nest once the conditions have been fulfilled. Same goes to exporting to Hong Kong."

He said with these conditions set, there will not be any monopoly in the industry and the traders, who want to export to China, should have made arrangement with their partners there.

He also called on all bird's nest traders to register with the ministry.

"There are about 50,000 bird's nest traders in Malaysia but the ministry has only managed to register about 2,000 in the last six months," said Noh Omar.

Edible bird's nest has been used in Chinese cooking for centuries.

China had banned bird's nest from Malaysia after it was found to have excessive nitrite last July.

Noh Omar also invited traders and bird's nest farmers associations to a forum on July 21 to discuss the matter with the ministry and urged them not to resort to street demonstrations.