

Bird's nest allowance

M'sia to seek special permission from China to export delicacy

By **ZUHRIN AZAM AHMAD**

zuhazinazam@thestar.com.my

PUTRAJAYA: The Government will be writing to China seeking special permission to allow entry of Malaysia's bird's nest if exporters comply with requirements.

Agriculture and Agro-based Minister Datuk Seri Noh Omar said Malaysia was banking on its good bilateral relationship with China to get the approval.

"The protocol is ready and just waiting to be signed.

"The Cabinet has agreed to invite the minister in charge of the matter

and accord him 'guest of the state' status.

"We are waiting for a reply, and in the meantime, we are seeking special permission to allow our bird's nest to enter the country," he told a news conference here yesterday.

Noh said the exporters must possess three certificates, two of which are issued by the Veterinary Services Department and the other by the Health Ministry.

He said the certificates issued by the Veterinary Department were the Veterinary Health Certificate and Certificate of Origin to indicate the

source of the nests.

"The Health Ministry certificate is to ensure the level of nitrite in the nests does not exceed 30ppm (parts per million).

"Exporters must ensure that their partners in China already have the import permit from their government.

"The exporters also must include radio frequency identification (RFID) for the whole supply chain and individual wrapping for the nests," he added.

The swiftlet industry has been severely hit since the Chinese authorities halted bird's nest imports

from Malaysia last July, when samples taken from the blood-red bird's nest products contained nitrite levels that did not meet China's health standards.

Matters were further complicated by new requirements, including the use of RFID.

Noh said the requirement was set by China's General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine, the authority in charge of the matter.

He added that it was not fair for industry players to blame the Government for not helping them in resolving the issue.