

'Pakistan has many business opportunities for Malaysians'

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PETALING JAYA.Wed.- Pakistan, with a population of 143 million, offers a wide range of business opportunities for Malaysian businessmen, former Malaysian High Commissioner to Pakistan Datuk Sopian Ahmad said.

They include the fields of waste management, energy, water supply and agriculture.

Sopian said Malaysia could save a lot of money if it imports from Pakistan certain products currently imported from the West,

"The business potential for both countries is tremendous," he said at a seminar on *Pakistan-Malaysia Relation: An Overview and Prospects for the Future* at the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations here today.

Sopian, who is also the present OIC under-secretary at the Foreign Ministry, said Pakistan produces 25 million tonnes of milk per year and Malaysia should consider buying it from them.

He said Pakistan is known for its temperate-climate fruits such as grapes and apples. "We spend a lot importing these *fruits from* other countries when we can import them from Pakistan at lower price,"

Sopian noted that the trade balance between the two countries was in Malaysia's favour, with Pakistan importing US\$415 million (RM1.5 billion) of palm oil while exporting a range of goods worth about US\$60 million to Malaysia;

Profesor Hidayat Ali Soomro, director of the Area Study Center, Far East & Southeast Asia of the University of Sindh, said Malaysia could import other products, such as surgical equipment and leather goods, from Pakistan.

Former diplomat Datuk Sallehuddin Abdullah, who is IDFR director of research and publications, noted that while many memorandums of understanding had been signed between the two countries, some had not been implemented.

NST senior editor A.R. Dean spoke on the need for an increase in education exchanges between the two countries.