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RM21m lab to certify halal products

PUTRAJAYA: A RM21mil laboratory for carrying out advanced tests to determine the "halalness" of products would be set up by 2011.

The lab to be set up at the Halal Management Complex at Bandar Einstek, Nilai, Negri Sembilan, is a joint venture between the Islamic Development Department (Jakim) and Universiti Putra Malaysia.

Jakim director-general Datuk Wan Mohammad Sheikh Abdul Aziz said the laboratory would expedite tests being conducted on products before they could be certified as halal.

He said that many companies were applying for halal certification from the department, adding that applications had surged from 716 in 2005 to 1,743 last year.

Wan Mohammad said that at present, Jakim depended on the Chemistry Department to help carry out tests before a halal certificate was issued.

"Once we have the laboratory, Jakim will be able to conduct tests effectively and efficiently," he told reporters after the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

between Jakim and UPM yesterday.

On another matter, he said an attache would be assigned to the Malaysian High Commission in Canberra from next month to supervise and monitor Australian religious bodies and abattoirs certified and approved by Jakim.

He said the Australian government had agreed to the appointment. The attache, a senior officer with Jakim, would liaise with both the Malaysian and Australian agencies on halal matters, particularly on the slaughtering of cows and lambs.