

Peru invites China to invest in industry, banking, ports

Lima, Nov 24 (EFE) Peruvian President Alan Garcia has invited China to invest in this country's automobile industry, banking system and port sector when he met Jia Qinglin, a member of the Chinese Communist Party Politburo.

Jia was awarded the 'Order of the Sun of Peru' in recognition of his contribution to deepening bilateral relations, Garcia's office said Monday.

Jia attended with Garcia the signing of a technical cooperation accord whereby the Beijing government formalised a donation of some \$2.9 million, a document that was inked by Chinese Deputy Trade Minister Ma Zihong and Peruvian Foreign Minister Jose Antonio Garcia Belaunde.

During the award presentation to Jia, Garcia said that Peru and China, who in April signed a bilateral free trade treaty, can 'open new areas' in the bilateral relationship that go beyond mining and petroleum activities, the state-run news agency Andina reported.

Garcia added that Peru can transform itself into the 'central point' for the Asian giant's auto industry in the region with the construction of factories to assemble Chinese vehicles.

He also invited representatives of the Chinese banking sector to invest in Peru to provide 'greater soundness and competitiveness' to his country's banking system, and he emphasised the strategic position of Peru's ports as a link for China and the rest of Asia with South America.

Jia said that relations between Peru and China have reached an historic level and he added that the Peruvians are 'allies and friends' of his country', Radio Nacional reported.

Garcia hopes to increase the \$7.31 billion in Chinese investments in Peru in 2008 to \$15 billion by 2015, and Chinese firms such as Chinalco, Shougang and Zijin are studying increasing their mining investments in the South American country.

After the US, China is the second most important destination for Peruvian exports with sales last year of \$3.74 billion, or 12 percent of the total.

Jia and about 100 Chinese businessmen are on a tour of the Philippines, Peru, Ecuador and Brazil.

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