

links with China will be **beneficial**, says Dr M

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KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysians and Chinese of mainland China should maximise the positive aspects of their relations for mutual benefit, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

The Prime Minister said there were a lot of benefits to be derived from the links and the friendship of Malaysian and Chinese people.

"Today, Malaysians are investing and helping to develop China while, on the other hand, China with its 1.2 billion people is the biggest importer of Malaysian palm oil," he said at the Malaysia-China Friendship Association dinner here last night.

The Prime Minister said while economic linkages and interaction between both countries were on the rise, it was important to promote co-

operation and understanding in other fields.

"MCFA is in a better position to take the initiatives without committing the governments as it will not be hamstrung by bureaucratic red tape or formalities.

"On the other hand, if its (MCFA's) initiative is contrary to official policies, it will not be difficult to reverse or drop it."

Dr Mahathir said that MCFA could also provide a forum for individuals in Malaysia who were interested in China.

A counterpart association in China, he said, could also provide similar facilities for Chinese nationals in China.

"The contact and interaction between the two associations will provide opportunities for Malaysian and Chinese businessmen to meet."

Dr Mahathir also suggested that the association provide more information on China to increase the knowledge of Malaysians of the Chinese.

He said such information should include the Chinese culture and way of life which would promote friendship and also facilitate trade and commerce.

On Malaysia's foreign policy, Dr Mahathir said the Government had no wish to export or impose its ideology on other countries.

"We are sure others (countries) including China will not want to propagate their ideologies here nor will we want to interfere in the internal affairs of each other."

He said China accepts the principles of peaceful co-existence.