

21 MAY 1999

Hamid-China

M'SIA-CHINA TO SIGN PACT FOR WIDER COOPERATION

KUALA LUMPUR, May 21 (Bernama) -- Malaysia and China, celebrating the 25th anniversary of diplomatic relations today, will sign an agreement on widening the scope of bilateral cooperation.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar is scheduled to go on a five-day visit to China from May 30 and to sign the cooperation agreement.

"The agreement's scope on bilateral cooperation is very wide and comprehensive covering trade and politics as well," Syed Hamid said after a function to commemorate the 25th anniversary of Malaysia-China diplomatic relations here today.

Diplomatic relations between Malaysia and China were pioneered by Malaysia's second Prime Minister, the late Tun Abdul Razak Hussein, who visited China in May 1974.

A special award by Malaysia and China to commemorate the services of the late Tun Abdul Razak was received by his wife, Tun Hajah Rahah Tan Sri Mohd Noah at the function.

Syed Hamid said Malaysia and China believed overlapping claims of many countries to the Spratly islands in the South China Sea could be resolved through peaceful means.

He said China is also Malaysia's important trading partner where bilateral trade has reached RM15 billion a year and in Malaysia's favour.

In his speech earlier, Syed Hamid said Malaysia looked forward to further enhanced bilateral relations with China.

He said Malaysia views China as an emerging economic player and as a potential lucrative market for its products.

"As a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, we recognise the pivotal role that China is playing in promoting peace and stability in the region and the world at large," he said.

Chinese Ambassador to Malaysia Guan Dengming said during the 25 years, China-Malaysia relationship of good-neighbourliness and friendship had been strengthened and great developments achieved in various fields.

"In international and regional affairs, both countries share wide common interests and have always maintained good coordination and cooperation," he said.

He said the Chinese government too appreciated important contributions made by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and various other Malaysian leaders.

-- BERNAMA

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