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Mahathir-Friendship

PM CONFIDENT OF WIDER MALAYSIA-CHINA COOPERATION IN NEW MILLENNIUM

By: Ali Mamat

BEIJING, Aug 19 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is confident that the new millennium will see wider cooperation between Malaysia and China.

New areas of cooperation could be exploited more effectively with the existence of the "Joint Statement on Future Bilateral Cooperation Framework" signed by the Foreign Ministers of both countries on May 31.

The Prime Minister said this after speaking in Bahasa Malaysia at a dinner in conjunction with the 25th anniversary celebration of diplomatic relations between Malaysia and China, here.

The celebration which also included various cultural performances from both countries was organised by the Malaysia-China and China-Malaysia Friendship Association.

According to Dr Mahathir, in the initial stages of the diplomatic relations, Malaysia-China cooperation was restricted to trade.

However, it has now included investment, education, tourism and air services.

He urged both friendship associations to intensify bilateral exchange programmes and visits because these could help both parties to understand each other better.

China's Vice Prime Minister Qian Qichen in his speech delivered in Mandarin said that since 25 years ago, Malaysia and China had upheld the principle of living together peacefully as the basis for bilateral relations.

He said that besides the people, the leaders of both countries frequently exchanged visits to enhance friendship.

President Jiang Zemin, for example, had visited Malaysia thrice while Dr Mahathir had been to China five times.

-- BERNAMA

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