

## **M'sia-China ties built on mutual respect, understanding – PM**

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Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim highlighted the friendly and respectful attitude of the Chinese leadership, emphasising the deep understanding of cultural differences, during his recent interactions with Chinese Premier Li Qiang.

In a speech, Anwar addressed the scepticism often expressed by international observers, particularly from Western countries, about the enhanced bilateral relationship between Malaysia and China.

He said critics frequently question whether such a comprehensive strategic partnership would be detrimental to Malaysia, a smaller nation.

"I have given assurances based on historical antecedents from the time of the emperors in China and the sultans of Malacca. This visit by Li, my esteemed friend, has proven the case. We engaged in hours of discussions without any arrogance or ultimatums.

"While there are contentious issues, we address them as equal partners and

trusted friends... we engaged in hours of discussion as equal partners and trusted friends," he said at the Malaysia-China Business Community luncheon in Kuala Lumpur today.

PM Anwar Ibrahim giving his speech at the Malaysia-China Business Community luncheon today

Shared concerns

Highlighting the broader scope of Malaysia-China cooperation, Anwar touched on shared concerns such as the future of education, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), artificial intelligence (AI) and digital advancements.

He also reiterated the mutual benefits of learning from each other and working together to improve the quality of life for the people in both countries as well as the importance of understanding and appreciating cultural and religious differences.

### **Enhancing understanding**

Anwar recalled organising a major international conference in 1995 on Islam and Confucianism, promoting ethical principles and humane economic practices and he was pleased that Li also supported the idea of enhancing understanding and

dialogue between Islam and Confucianism.

“I choose to say this because this itself is a rebuke and rebuttal to the incessant propaganda that we should cast aspersion and fear the dominance of China economically, militarily, and technology.

“... we in Malaysia having a neutral stance, have the resolve to work with all countries and with China, we see Li, we see (China) as a friend that would work together with us, collaborate and prove to the world that this unity, this friendship is meaningful,” he added.

Also present were Li; Investment, Trade and Industry Minister Tengku Zafrul Abdul Aziz; China’s Commerce Minister Wang Wentao, delegations and members of the business communities.

## **50 years**

Li arrived in Malaysia for an official three-day visit on Tuesday, the third and last leg of his eight-day tour that has taken him to New Zealand and Australia.

Li’s visit coincides with the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Malaysia and China, following the signing of the Joint Communiqué between second prime minister Abdul Razak Hussein and then

Chinese premier Chou En Lai on May 31, 1974.

China has remained Malaysia's largest trading partner for 15 consecutive years since 2009, with total trade amounting to RM450.84 billion in 2023.

Malaysia's ties with China have grown from strength to strength since the elevation of bilateral relations to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2013.

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