

# Malaysia, China target RM170b trade

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** The close and warm ties between Malaysia and China will form the basis for the two countries to achieve the US\$50 billion (RM170 billion) bilateral trade target in 2010.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said bilateral trade between Malaysia and China had already reached some US\$22 billion last year. He said the two countries' relationship could only grow from strength to strength.

"If you understand each other, learn each other's language and culture, and embrace each other, you could become a nation which is confident of moving bilateral relations faster and further," he said at a dinner last night to mark the 15th anniversary of the Malaysia-China Friendship Association, the 33rd anniversary of Malaysia-China diplomatic relations and Malaysia's 50th year of independence.

Najib said Malaysia and China had always supported each other through good and bad times. Citing as an example the Tiananmen Square incident when the PRC was condemned by the Western world, he said Malaysia had stood by China.

"And in turn when we faced the financial crisis in 1997, China helped us regain our financial stability. That's why Malaysia has never viewed China as a threat as implied by the Western world."

Najib said China offered many op-



Datuk Seri Najib Razak (centre) cutting a cake to commemorate the 15th anniversary of the Malaysia-China Friendship Association, the 33 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries and Malaysia's 50th independence. Flanking him are (from left) the association vice-president Datuk Yong Ah Pwi, president Datuk Abdul Majid Ahmad Khan, Chinese ambassador to Malaysia Cheng Yonghua and the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries vice-president Feng Zuoku.

portunities and called on Malaysian companies to increase two-way trade with the country.

"Not only the Malaysian Chinese but Malays as well. China is becoming a world economic superpower. We are not frightened of China but view them as an opportunity."

Najib also said he supported the

suggestion by former deputy prime minister Tun Musa Hitam that more Malays should learn Mandarin.

Malaysia-China Friendship Association president Datuk Abdul Majid Ahmad Khan said the association, which has 2,000 members, was committed to assisting the government in strengthening ties with China.