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# Najib: Malaysia committed to enhancing China ties

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysia is committed to strengthening its relationship with China to benefit the two nations, ensuring regional stability and harmony.

Datuk Seri Najib Razak, in an interview with China's Xinhua news agency, said he was committed to developing Malaysia's "strong and stable" relations with China, saying he intended to ensure that "it continuously improves and reaches new heights".

The prime minister, who is in China for a week-long official visit since Monday, regarded China "as a true friend and a strategic partner".

The relationship between Malaysia and China, he said, had created benefits not just for the people of the two nations but also for regional stability and harmony.

"It is a relationship I am personally committed to; not just as the Malaysian prime minister, but also as the son of Tun Abdul Razak Hussein, who first established diplomatic relations with China 42 years ago," he said in a written response to Xinhua.

Najib said he agreed with Chinese President Xi Jinping, who compared China's relations with

Malaysia "as being as close as lips are to teeth" and Premier Li Ke-qiang, who recognised Malaysia as a "good neighbour, good partner and a good friend".

He also listed a series of major infrastructure projects in railways, real estate and energy, the opening of a campus by China's Xiamen University in Malaysia and an increasing influx of Chinese tourists in Malaysia, which he hoped could reach two million by year end.

Military cooperation, he said, had hit new heights, adding that the two countries would be finalising the first significant defence deal during his trip.

He said a number of new agreements and understandings ranging from economy and defence to education and innovation would be signed during the visit.

Aside from a number of opportunities to do business with China, including energy and infrastructure, Najib also told Xinhua that Malaysia had welcomed significant investment from China in innovation and technology.

He said Chinese telecommunications giant Huawei's expanding presence in Malaysia symbolised the confidence that leading Chinese companies have in the

Malaysian economy.

Najib commended the China-proposed Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, saying he believed the bank "can join the ranks of the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank as a powerful platform to assist developing countries achieve greater growth and development".

He also welcomed the "Belt and Road Initiative", saying there were clear synergies between the initiative and the country's national transformation plan, which he put forward at the 2017 Budget speech last month.

Touching on issues of security challenges faced by Malaysia and China, Najib said both countries agreed to further strengthen cooperation in the areas of law enforcement, security and defence, including friendly visits and security consultation between respective law enforcement, security and defence agencies.

There would also be an increased cooperation between the two sides in joint exercises and personnel training, he added.

Najib is on his third visit to China since becoming prime minister. He will visit Beijing, Tianjin, Gu'an and Zhangjiakou during his trip.