

BELT AND ROAD FORUM FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

'MALAYSIA IS CHINA'S FRIEND'

There is a great future for Malaysia-China relations, says Dr M

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CHINESE companies, which have been waiting for a signal on the future of Malaysia and China's bilateral relationship, received the clearest indication yet from Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday.

"Malaysia is a friend of China. We believe in being business friendly to all countries," the prime minister told Chinese corporate leaders at a dialogue held in conjunction with his working visit to Beijing for the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation.

He invited Chinese businessmen to come to Malaysia and experience for themselves what the

country had to offer.

"Malaysia is a stable, multiracial country with three major races living in peace.

"We are a friendly country, a friend of China and see a great future for Malaysia-China relations," said Dr Mahathir, who had earlier been labelled "pro-Japan, anti-China" after several mega projects with the dominant Asian economic superpower were either cancelled or reviewed when Pakatan Harapan took over as the ruling government.

He has refuted such claims, saying that he had defended China on international platforms on many occasions.

Another good sign was the successful renegotiation of the previously stalled multibillion ringgit East Coast Rail Link project that had caused uncertainty in



MOBILE LIVE
STREAM

A journalist using her mobile phone to broadcast live as she shows a book about Chinese President Xi Jinping at the China National Convention Centre in Beijing yesterday.
AFP PIC

the bilateral relationship.

On Chinese companies in lopsided deals with the previous government as brought up by a participant during the dialogue, Dr Mahathir said the matter could be reviewed.

"We will see what we can do to reduce costs."

Outlining Malaysia's attributes to the businessmen present, Dr Mahathir said Malaysia was stable and people could be comfortable with its rules and laws.

"We don't change much. Rules and laws remain the same even though the government has changed.

The previous government was in power for 61 years."

He said policies and rules re-

garding foreign investment had not changed.

Corporate leaders present asked Dr Mahathir about Malaysia's position on renewable energy, the many festive public holidays which they claimed affected productivity, the setting up of industrial parks and the use of electric cars.

On festive breaks, Dr Mahathir said they were important to the multiracial, multi-religious country.

"I am sure you can adjust to the many holidays, probably by working overtime or on Saturdays and Sundays."

He, however, acknowledged that this scenario was experienced by the government, too.

"We will see how we can tackle this."

He underscored Malaysia's efforts in making the switch from conventional energy sources to renewable energy, such as hydro power, solar and even wind.

"But not nuclear."

To another question, Dr Mahathir said the government would consider revising individual and corporate income tax rates if it enabled Malaysia to become more competitive.

"We have no plans to raise taxes, but are looking at ways to reduce them. Malaysia, for example, reduced taxes for the import of luxury goods. This will encourage people to come to buy things here as they are cheap."