

Dr M endorses the BRI

Many countries are going to benefit from initiative



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WITH all of China as his stage, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad gave a massive endorsement to the country's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), saying all will benefit from the ease of travel and communication the development strategy will bring.

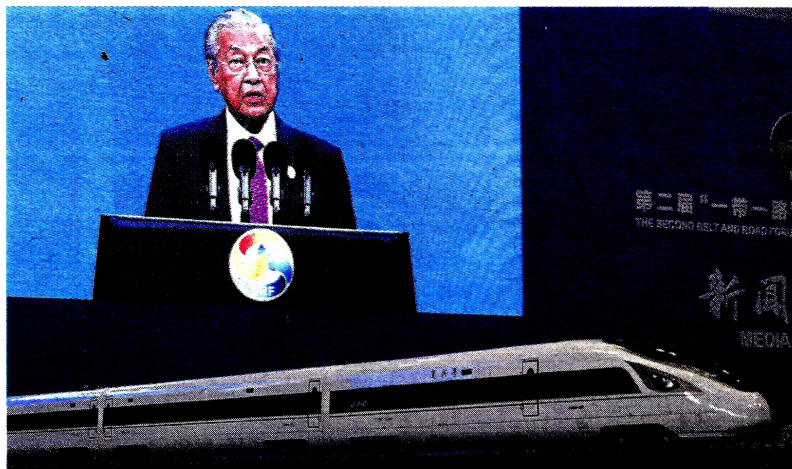
The Prime Minister said that with trade driving the world, it was only natural that land and sea passages be better developed.

"The Silk Road, the land passage between East and West, has not received much attention. Yet it must be obvious that with modern technologies the passage can be improved.

"Without a doubt, the utilisation of these passages will enrich all the littoral states along the way, as much as the great nations of the East and West. I am fully in support of the Belt and Road Initiative. I am sure my country, Malaysia, will benefit from the project," he said in his speech at the High-Level Meeting of the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation held at the China National Convention Centre here yesterday.

The forum attracted over 5,000 participants from 150 countries including leaders from around the world, such as Russian President Vladimir Putin, President Rodrigo Duterte (Philippine), President Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi (Egypt) and Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc.

The BRI, also known as the One Belt One Road (OBOR) or the Silk Road Economic Belt



Hearing him out: Dr Mahathir giving his speech at the Beit and Road Forum in Beijing. — AP

and the 21st-century Maritime Silk Road, is a strategy adopted by the Chinese government involving infrastructure development and investments in 152 countries and international organisations in Europe, Asia, Middle East, Latin America and Africa.

Dr Mahathir said just as massive trade by ships helped spawn the development of huge bulk carriers, the land passage should also "respond" to the increased trade between East and West. He also suggested that bigger trains be built for the purpose.

"If ships can be built bigger, why can't trains be equally big to carry more goods and raw material and people? Have we reached the limit in terms of the size and length of trains? I think not," he pointed out.

Dr Mahathir, who is on his second visit to China since becoming the 7th Prime Minister last May, said the world has the technology and funds to bring about such improvements.

He said freedom of passage along these routes was important and warned against bureaucratic hassles slowing down the speed of travel.

"It is essential therefore for these passages to be free and open to all," he said, adding that the passages must be made safe as terrorism and wars would render the modern marvels and also delivering the benefits promised.

"Yes, the Belt and Road idea is a great. It can bring the landlocked countries of Central Asia closer to the sea. They can grow in wealth and their poverty reduced.

"As the sea routes and land routes improve, trade and travel will grow, and with this, the wealth of the world will increase for the betterment of everyone.

Watch the video
thestartv.com

