

Mahathir: Accept diversity

Leaders urged to forge better ties for the sake of world peace

TUN Dr Mahathir Mohamad is calling for the acceptance of the differences in cultures and values and to forge a better understanding of each other for the sake of world peace.

He said there should not be just one single value system for the world because many countries were not prepared for it.

"We need to tolerate different cultures and values," he said at a leaders roundtable session at the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation here yesterday.

Dr Mahathir said although the world has made tremendous progress in technology, it did not commensurate with the process in forging a better understanding of each other.

"The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) should be able to connect people, and a better connection will create better understanding and



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make the world more prosperous.

"We need to improve connections, such as roads, railways and lines of communication.

"We also need to make connections by learning different languages and new approaches to education," he said, adding that the BRI will not only help to foster development, it will also promote a better understanding of people of different races, cultures and values.

"Only through understanding can we reap the benefits of an interconnected world," he added.

Dr Mahathir emphasised the need to accept the differences in

cultures and values of the people.

"Asians should be allowed to preserve their own values. We should not impose one single value (on others).

"When certain values are (forcefully) imposed, it will be disruptive, resulting in violence," Dr Mahathir said.

He said the BRI extends to many parts of the globe and he believes the initiative would contribute towards making the world more peaceful and connected while reducing the gap between the rich and poor.

The Prime Minister is on a five-day trip here, with his main mission being to attend the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation.

He participated in a leaders' roundtable session, where he delivered his views and ideas on topics

such as Strengthening Policy Synergy and Building Closer Partnership.

Dr Mahathir was greeted by Chinese President Xi Jinping when he arrived at the Yanqi Lake Exhibition Center, located on the outskirts of the Chinese capital, for the forum yesterday.

Nearly 40 world leaders and more than 100 representatives from countries along the Belt and Road attended the event, which ended yesterday.

Later, Dr Mahathir made a tour of the Malaysia Durian Festival.

He witnessed the exchange of documents between PLS Plantation and four companies - FGV Holdings from Malaysia and China's Shanghai Greenland Group, ZTE Corporation and PTSKY - for the distribution and promotion of the King of Fruits in the country.