

# 'GOVT COMMITTED TO KL-BEIJING TIES'

**Trade, investment growth between two countries has been meteoric, says PM**

**KUALA LUMPUR**

**T**HE new government that came into power in May last year is committed to strengthening Malaysia-China relations with closer and more meaningful cooperation, said Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The trade and investment growth between the two countries in recent years had been meteoric and this trend would

continue to generate more opportunities in the areas of tourism, science and technology, as well as cultural exchanges, Dr Mahathir said in a message in a souvenir book published by the Malaysia-China Friendship Association, better known as PPMC, to mark the 45th anniversary of diplomatic ties between the two countries.

He said in the initial stages, it was more of a government-to-government relationship, but now the partnership had scaled numerous levels and chalked up milestones, which made China Malaysia's biggest trade partner.

"China's astonishing growth in the last few decades, which catapulted it to become the world's second biggest economy, had contributed much to its extensive

presence not only in Malaysia, but also in other parts of the world.

"Our cooperation has grown in various levels and sectors. I believe apart from the roles played by the government and political leaders, various associations and non-governmental organisations from both nations, including PPMC, have contributed much to the strong and positive state of affairs enjoyed by our countries."

He said in 1993, he witnessed the signing of a memorandum of understanding between PPMC and its sister organisation, the China-Malaysia Friendship Association, in Beijing during one of his visits to China.

"I wish to congratulate PPMC for being able to sustain the

friendship through all these years and; in fact, taking it to a higher level."

Dr Mahathir said despite changes of leadership in both countries, the partnership had remained constant through the years, thanks to their adherence to the principle of non-interference in each other's internal affairs and striving to be good neighbours.

"I have always believed in the principle of 'prosper thy neighbour' and as China prospered, it has, in turn, prospered Malaysia as well."

On China's Belt and Road Initiative, Dr. Mahathir said Malaysia supported it as the benefits were mutually shared and distributed.

He added that for Malaysia, it

was a continuation of the ancient trade that started way back during the Melaka Sultanate and trading between both countries had never diminished for centuries.

PPMC was formed in 1992, with active members comprising entrepreneurs, investors, academicians, artists, educationists, politicians and professionals, as well as government officials sharing a mutual interest in wanting to see a strong and sustained friendship, understanding and partnership between Malaysia and China.

In April 2005, veteran diplomat and former Malaysian ambassador to China, Datuk Abdul Majid Ahmad Khan, was elected PPMC president and he holds the office till today. **Bernama**