

# MALAYSIA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH CHINA VITAL, SAYS PM

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Asian geopolitics  
50 years ago,  
says Anwar

KUALA LUMPUR

**P**RIME Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has reiterated the government's commitment to strengthening Malaysia-China ties, describing it as a "vital relationship".

"Fifty years ago today, Malaysia and China reshaped the landscape of Asian geopolitics," Anwar said in a Facebook post.

"On May 31, 1974, our two nations embarked on a groundbreaking journey by establishing diplomatic relations," he said, adding that Malaysia was the first non-socialist Southeast Asian country to do so.

Anwar said despite ideological and seemingly irreconcilable differences, the leaders of both countries at the time took a bold leap of faith in establishing diplomatic ties.

"This audacious move has blossomed into a rich and fruitful partnership. The Madani government is committed to nurturing this vital relationship for the prosperity of our peoples and the entire region.

"I eagerly anticipate the official visit of Chinese Premier Li Qiang to Malaysia as we celebrate this historic milestone."

Diplomatic and economic ties with China have grown from strength to strength in recent years. Since 2009, China has been Malaysia's largest trading partner. Last year, Malaysia's trade with China stood at RM450.8 billion.

In **Beijing**, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi held a meeting with Chinese Vice-Premier Ding Xuexiang at Diaoyutai State Guest House here yesterday.

The meeting was in conjunction with his first official visit to the republic from May 22 until today at the invitation of Ding.

Zahid, who is rural and regional development minister, arrived at 10am to hold a discussion with his counterpart for an hour.

In their welcome speeches, he and Ding expressed their appreciation for the diplomatic ties established between Malaysia and China since May 31, 1974.

Earlier, Wisma Putra said the deputy prime minister's visit aimed to strengthen bilateral relations and explore opportunities for cooperation, especially in the field of education focusing on technical and vocational education and training, halal industry development and people-to-people exchanges.