

# Mutual respect from China

## Cordial relations with M'sia sign of long friendship, says PM

**KUALA LUMPUR:** China's leaders are respectful, friendly and have a deep understanding of cultural differences, says Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

"We engaged in hours of discussions without any arrogance or ultimatums," the Prime Minister said.

In his speech at a business luncheon attended by Chinese and Malaysian business leaders yesterday, Anwar addressed the scepticism often expressed by international observers, particularly from the West, about the enhanced bilateral relationship between Malaysia and China.

He said critics frequently questioned whether such a partnership would be detrimental to Malaysia, a smaller nation.

"I have given assurances based on historical antecedents dating back to the time of the emperors in China and the Sultans of Melaka. This visit by Premier Li Qiang, my esteemed friend, has proven the case," Bernama quoted him as saying.

Anwar said both he and Li

touched on shared concerns such as the future of education, technical and vocational education and training (TVET), and artificial intelligence (AI).

He also reiterated the mutual benefits of learning from each other and working together to improve the quality of life for the people of both countries, as well as the importance of understanding and appreciating cultural and religious differences.

"I chose to say this because this itself is a rebuke and rebuttal to the incessant propaganda that we should cast aspersion and fear the dominance of China economically, militarily and technologically," he said at the Malaysia-China Business Community luncheon.

Malaysia, with its neutral stance, would have the resolve to work with all countries and China.

"We see Premier Li Qiang; we see (China) as a friend that would work together with us, collaborate and be proof to the world that this unity, this friendship are meaningful," he said.

"While there are contentious issues, we address them as equal partners and trusted friends. We engaged in hours of discussion as equal partners and trusted friends."

The luncheon was attended by Li, Investment, Trade and Industry Minister Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Abdul Aziz, China's Commerce Minister Wang Wentao, and leaders from China's and Malaysia's business communities.

In his remarks, Li highlighted the significant expansion and deepening of economic and trade cooperation between China and Malaysia since both countries started diplomatic relations 50 years ago.

The trade volume between the two countries has soared by a staggering 100-fold today compared to a decade ago, he said.

"China is Malaysia's main source of trade; 80% of the investments in Malaysia over the past 10 years have originated from China.

"The investment covers a broad

spectrum of sectors, including fisheries and agriculture, transportation, electricity, oil, manufacturing, finance, and the digital economy. This comprehensive development strategy aims to ensure long-term, sustainable economic growth for both nations."

In the next 50 years, Li encouraged business leaders of both nations to seize opportunities in green development, the digital economy, AI and life sciences.

"Business leaders have to understand and listen to the needs of both countries to foster closer relations and mutual prosperity," he said.

Li, whose three-day visit to Malaysia ended yesterday, was on the third and last leg of his eight-day tour that had also taken him to New Zealand and Australia.