

**KL, Beijing Harvesting Fruits of Tun Razak's Trust in China – Najib
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KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 2 (Bernama) -- Malaysia and China are now reaping the fruits of the trust placed by Malaysia's second prime minister Tun Abdul Razak Hussein in China back in 1974, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

Najib said that back then his father embarked on what he called a "journey into the unknown to sow the seeds of mutual understanding and trust".

Recalling the opening chapter in Kuala Lumpur-Beijing ties, he said Tun Razak did so in the face of questions and criticism as many thought that he was wrong to lead Malaysia to become the first country in the region to establish diplomatic relations with China.

"Decades later, my father's decision to place his trust in China has been validated, and we have harvested the fruits of his vision.

"Economic and trade relations between Malaysia and China have grown from strength to strength, helped by close political and business exchanges at the highest levels," he wrote in an article for China Daily.

Najib pointed out that China was Malaysia's largest trading partner in 2015, a position it had maintained since 2009, with two-way trade last year totalling about US\$100 billion.

"I've seen how China has retaken its place on the world stage as a great power, while in Malaysia we've progressed from being agricultural-based to an upper-middle income economy, well on the path to becoming a high-income developed nation," he said.

Najib, who is currently on a six-day official visit to China, alluded to Malaysia-China partnerships in fields like the industry, infrastructure, defence, real estate, railways, energy, education and others.

He specifically mentioned the futuristic underground metropolis of Bandar Malaysia, planned for Kuala Lumpur that would be the largest underground city in the world.

"And we're delighted that Malaysia has been chosen to host Xiamen University Malaysia, the first overseas branch of any public Chinese university," he said.

Najib also highlighted what he described as the first significant defence deal between the two countries, with Malaysia purchasing littoral mission ships from China - the first two of which would be built in China.

He drove home the point that the relationship between China and Malaysia was based on mutual trust and respect, but at the same time "we recognize that there can be issues where even the closest of friends may disagree".

"When it comes to the South China Sea, we firmly believe that the overlapping territorial and maritime disputes should be managed calmly and rationally through dialogue, in accordance with the rule of law and peaceful negotiations.

"More generally, we believe that it's incumbent upon larger countries to treat smaller ones fairly. And this includes former colonial powers. It's not for them to lecture countries they once exploited on how to conduct their own internal affairs today," Najib said.

Malaysia and China, he said, were united in agreeing on the need to defend the sovereignty of the nation state and in the belief that individual histories, values and governance systems of different countries must be respected.

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