

**Do Not Dispute Government's Approach to Strengthen Ties with China - Reeza Merican  
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KANGAR, Nov 22 (Bernama) -- Deputy Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Reeza Merican Naina Merican has asked the people to trust the government and not dispute its approach to strengthen ties with China.

He said the government always did its best for the people and to spur the country's economic progress.

He spoke as a panellist of the forum 'Trump and the Stand of Muslims' organised by the Perlis Mufti Department, Perlis Islamic Affairs and Malay Customs Department and the Tuanku Syed Putra Jamalullail Mosque here last night.

The Raja Muda of Perlis, Tuanku Syed Faizuddin Putra Jamalullail, attended the forum which was held at the mosque.

Reeza Merican said Malaysians should be thankful to former Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak Hussein for having had the vision to establish diplomatic relations with China way back in 1974.

"That effort is being continued by his son (and current Prime Minister) Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak who realises those good ties with China can help the Malaysian economy," he said.

Reeza Merican dismissed the accusations by certain quarters that Najib's securing of huge Chinese investments was tantamount to mortgaging the country's sovereignty to China.

"All quarters should realise that China, with a population of 1.6 billion, is the world's second largest economy after the United States.

"The good relations will pave the way for the export of more Malaysian goods to China, which will benefit us and the country," he said.

Another panellist, Dr Maszlee Malik, said Islamic countries should have a leader with the capability to check United States president-elect Donald Trump from having a jaundiced view of Islam and Muslims.

Maszlee, who is a member of the Perlis Fatwa Committee, said it was important for Islamic countries to forge closer relations because only solidarity could provide the strength to face any eventuality.

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