

## **Malaysia to strive for better ties with China - Dr Mahathir**

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**From Jamaluddin Muhammad**

BEIJING, Aug 19 (Bernama) – Kuala Lumpur will go all out to forge better ties with Beijing as this would bring mutual benefits for both sides, said Malaysian Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said focusing on economic development rather than confrontation should be the way forward in terms of relations between Malaysia and China.

In this regard, Chinese businessmen were welcome to invest in Malaysia, he said when addressing some 400 top Chinese entrepreneurs and business leaders here Sunday.

Dr Mahathir is on a five-day official visit to China.

Dr Mahathir also made it clear what was the new Malaysian government's stand with regard to investments from China.

"We're not against any Chinese company but against Malaysians who borrow huge sums of money to carry out unnecessary projects," he told the China Entrepreneur Leaders Forum.

There have been worries that touchy issues concerning some Chinese projects in Malaysia are standing in the way of good relations between the two countries lately.

Dr Mahathir noted that Malaysia had had a relationship with China for almost 2,000 years.

"Today, China's trade with Malaysia is the biggest compared with other countries in the region," he said.

"There was a time when China was very poor, but now China is rich... Even at a time when it was poor it was a market for Malaysia, but now that it is rich we feel that China is a big market," said Dr Mahathir.

He said by China's trading and investing in Malaysia, both sides would be able to build a big market for China as well.

"So there's mutual benefit in having good relations with each other, solving problems between us not through confrontation but through negotiation, arbitration, and the court of law.

"That's the way we should go," Dr Mahathir said, adding that confrontation would not help build their economies.

The prime minister said both countries could complement each other, especially in the economic field, for the benefit of their people.

Dr Mahathir also touched on how China's development came about, which led to its emergence as a major producer of goods and services for the world.

In calling for the country's business community to invest in Malaysia, he said this would help Malaysia become a producer country from merely a consumer country.

Answering a question from the floor, the prime minister underscored that the new government of Malaysia under his leadership would not allow corruption in the Malaysian business environment.

He said this in response to a claim from a Chinese businessman that he previously had to make a certain amount of payment in order to get business in Malaysia.

"I give you all the assurance that this new government will not allow that (kind of thing to continue) to happen," he added.

The China Entrepreneur Club, which organised the event, consists of the republic's top 60 entrepreneurs whose companies posted revenue totalling US\$600 billion last year.

Alibaba co-founder Jack Ma, who is the club's chairman, moderated the forum.

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