

**SPEECH TEXT BY PRIME MINISTER: LUNCHEON OF MALAYSIA-  
CHINA BUSINESS COMMUNITY 2024**

By : DATO' SERI ANWAR IBRAHIM

Date : 20/06/2024

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**SPEECH TEXT BY**

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**PRIME MINISTER**

**SEMPENA**

**LUNCHEON OF MALAYSIA-CHINA BUSINESS COMMUNITY  
2024**

**20 JUN 2024**

**SHANGRI-LA HOTEL, KUALA LUMPUR**

Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh dan Salam Sejahtera.

Excellency, Premier Li Qiang, Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China.

Fellow ministers, excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

1. I must begin by expressing my again thanks to the business community from both local China and Malaysia for taking the initiative and ensuring that the collaboration between the leaders and government is affected through business and investments and increased trade.

2. Therefore, I'm glad that MITI and Commerce ministry and the private sectors are able to collaborate the golden anniversary of our diplomatic relations. We learned about diplomatic encounter followed by "ping pong diplomacy" was trying to get Premier Li Qiang to play ping pong with me, but time does not permit.

3. And now it has been further expanded to a more elaborate, extensive horary of investments in various fields. And I am pleased to note that these investments have been increasing and we have registered impressive growth last year and this year.

4. But what is pertinent, and I would like to share this with participants beyond business and trade issues. I spent the whole day yesterday with Premier Li Qiang and again this morning, this afternoon joining me for lunch. Contrary to the barrage of questions and narrative from the others. I sense the attitude of the Chinese leadership, friendly, courteous, full of respect, understanding of cultures and differences, and this is not what is being portrayed elsewhere.

5. In most of my encounters engagements with many friends overseas, particularly the western, the basic question asked is whether this sort of enhanced, bilateral, comprehensive, strategic relationship would be at the expense of Malaysia as a small nation.

6. I've given them assurances based on historical antecedents from the time of the emperors in China and the Sultans in Malacca. They did not convince them. But I think this visit by Premier Li Qiang, my esteemed friend, which I greatly respect, has proven the case. We have hours of discussions. Nothing seems to be arrogant, condescending or ultimatum.

7. Yes, there are issues, some more contentious, but we discuss as equal partners, as trusted friends, and I want to use this opportunity to allay the concerns of others, and more so my people in Malaysia, that this is a true sign, respect and friendship, and we will continue to cherish this between Malaysia and the People's Republic of China. In fact, I must say I'm not underestimating the importance or underplaying the importance of trade investments.

8. I leave it to my colleagues and I've seen the records. I've mentioned about the participation of so many companies, the Ai in Penang, the Geely and Proton Perak, and those in Johor and Sabah Sarawak, no question. And expanding and I must say thank you.

9. But I want to use this opportunity because the last session an open conference meeting in the presence of astounding and honored colleagues both from Malaysia and China.

10. Now is astounding, what is impressive is that the discussions expand beyond just trade and investment. People say, well, Malaysia is a growing economy. Don't let China abuse, is privileged and extort from the country. I said no. To the contrary, we want to benefit from one another, we want to learn from one another, and we want to profit from this engagement, because only through this process we can help our people, both Malaysia and China.

11. But extending beyond that which I want to reiterate today is our concern about our families, about the future for our children, the quality of education, the facilities through TVET, through Ai and digital. All these things are shared. There are issues that we can contribute less.

12. There are issues that the Chinese can contribute and we discuss this as close friends. How do we do this together and benefit one another? And again, beyond this, what is close to my heart and Premier Li Qiang knows in our discussion with President Xi Jinping covers even issues of civilization.

13. And they know the fact that in 1995 I organize this major international conference, Islam and Confucianism, get people to understand and appreciate one another, get people to understand that we have differences in terms of our belief and our culture.

14. But let us be ethical, embody ethical principles of a humane economy. And I am pleased that Premier Li Qiang mentioned this specifically. Let us collaborate to enhance our understanding and probably support the whole idea of a dialogue, a meaningful dialogue between Islam and Confucianism.

15. Now, I choose to say this because this in itself is a rebuke and rebuttal to the incessant propaganda that we should cast expressions and fear the dominance of China economically, militarily, technology. We do not. We in Malaysia, having a neutral stance, have the resolve to work with all countries and with China. We see Premier Li Qiang, we see you as a friend that would work together with us, collaborate and prove to the world that this unity, this friendship, is meaningful.

16. So pardon me for departing from my original reference to trade and economics and business, because I think rarely would have the opportunity to address from such a prominent leader from China and in the presence of many of our colleague and business community that Malaysia is your true friend. And to Malaysians, China is our true friend. Xièxiè.

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Source: <https://www.pmo.gov.my/2024/06/speech-text-by-prime-minister-luncheon-of-malaysia-china-business-community-2024/>