

# Najib and Wen seal three pacts to herald close ties

N.S.T 4/6/09 M/S 2

## Both governments agree to strategic cooperation in key areas

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Reporting from  
**BEIJING, CHINA**



MALAYSIA and China signed a high-level agreement yesterday to herald a new phase in relations on their 35th anniversary.

The two governments agreed to three documents following a meeting between Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak and his counterpart Wen Jiabao — a joint action plan for strategic cooperation, reduced visa requirements for officials and an agreement to cooperate in marine science and technology.

In impromptu remarks at the signing ceremony, which was conducted in the same room in the Great Hall of the People as the inking of the joint communique between Tun Abdul Razak Hussein and Zhou Enlai in 1974, Wen said yesterday's "talks opened a new chapter in friendly relations, characterised by strategic cooperation between our two countries".

He paid homage to Razak's decision to establish diplomatic ties with China as "far-sighted and courageous".

"The Chinese say that when you drink water, do not forget who dug the well. It is important to always remember the source of the water, so we will never forget the remarkable efforts of the previous generation of leaders in both countries.

"I believe father and son share the same sentiments about China," Wen said.



Datuk Seri Najib Razak receiving his honorary doctorate in international relations from China's Deputy Education Minister-cum-president of Beijing Foreign Studies University Professor Hao Ping yesterday. Also present are the prime minister's wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor (second from right) and his mother Tun Rahah Mohd Noah (right).

The Chinese premier presented a photograph of the signing of the communique between Razak and Zhou 35 years ago to Najib and his family. Both leaders made a commitment to consciously elevate relations at a time when they have seemed to run on auto-pilot.

Najib on his part said he felt there was "something special" in the Malaysia-China relationship.

"I am not only following in the footsteps of my late father but I intend to go further because China has developed so fast and it is important for us to now look at China not only as a loyal friend but as a partner in charting a new course," he said.

"The first generation has done its part by establishing diplomatic relations 35 years ago, it is now in-

cumbent upon us and subsequent generations to carry them onwards."

He ended with a twist to Wen's adage: "We should not only not forget the people who dug the well but we should dig even more wells so that water will forever be bountiful for the future benefit of our two countries."

The Joint Action Plan on Strategic Cooperation is an omnibus agreement on collaboration in all key areas — political, economic, trade and finance, culture and education, science and technology, health, defence and security, agriculture, tourism, human resources, energy, forestry and regional and international cooperation.

The Partial Abolition of Visa

Agreement covers regulations pertaining to the travel of holders of diplomatic and official or service passports, Wisma Putra said in a statement. They will no longer require visas to go to China or Malaysia.

Najib inspected a guard of honour amid a 19-gun salute at Tiananmen Square's Eastern Plaza before the bilateral meeting with Wen. The two prime ministers also witnessed the signing of a memorandum of understanding between China Post and Pos Malaysia, covering five areas including courier services, e-commerce and postal remittances.

Najib is due to address a business roundtable and pay a courtesy call on President Hu Jintao today.