

China's Image in Malaysian Mainstream Newspapers: Comparing Belt & Road Initiative Media Framing Across Languages

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Abstract

Malaysia has marked more than a decade of partnership with China under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The new Pakatan Harapan government, led by Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, has reaffirmed Malaysia's support for the BRI and committed to enhancing trade cooperation with China, suggesting positive prospects for bilateral relations. Therefore, understanding media portrayals of the BRI is essential. While previous studies have explored media framing of China and the BRI, less attention has been given to differences across language newspapers. In Malaysia's multiracial society, newspapers in different languages reflect distinct ethnic perspectives. Through quantitative content analysis, this study reveals that Chinese-language newspapers emphasise issues related to Chinese cultural inheritance, which are rarely seen in Malay and English language newspapers. Malay newspapers focus more on issues related to the ECRL, while English-language newspapers feature more international news, particularly on international and ASEAN collaboration. These differences reflect historical, cultural and political orientations that shape how the BRI is framed across Malaysia's multilingual media landscape.

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1. Introduction

Malaysia celebrated the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations with China last year, in 2024. Over the years, the bond between the two nations has remained robust since their diplomatic ties were established in 1974. According to Voon (2024), China stands as one of Malaysia's most significant economic partners. Anwar Ibrahim, also serving as the finance minister, emphasised in 2023 that China remains Malaysia's primary export destination, with trade volume reaching RM450.84 billion. The economic collaboration between the two countries continues to strengthen, resulting in increased mutual investments. As of February 2024, the trade volume between China and Malaysia had reached a remarkable US\$15.52 billion, securing their position as the largest trading partners for the 15th consecutive year.

The Belt and Road Initiative, a major project initiated by China to connect Asia, Africa and Europe, has garnered significant attention. China characterises the BRI as an infrastructure project for international cooperation (Weng *et al.*, 2021) and aimed at enhancing infrastructural, economic and cultural connections across these continents (Ni, 2024). Flint and Zhu (2019) have identified three main goals through its strategies: economic integration, regional influence and global geopolitical impact. Some argue that the BRI is China's geopolitical move in Asia, Africa and Europe, in competition with the United States (Wang, 2016).

Malaysia, the first Southeast Asian country to establish diplomatic relations with China (Noor & Qistina, 2017), demonstrates a strong commitment to capitalising on the opportunities presented by the Belt and Road Initiative. This is evident as Malaysia was one of the pioneering countries to support the BRI when Chinese President Xi Jinping formally announced it in 2013 to link East Asia and Europe through physical infrastructure. Since then, Malaysia has received a substantial inflow of BRI-related funds for infrastructure (Francis & Tham, 2021). This dedication is further reflected by the establishment of the Belt & Road Initiative National Secretariat (BRINS) Malaysia in 2017 by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry, which aims to coordinate, monitor and facilitate the Belt and Road projects in the country (Teo, 2019). As reported by Voon (2024),

Chinese President Xi Jinping mentioned that Anwar Ibrahim's reaffirmation of Malaysia's support for China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and his commitment to enhancing trade cooperation with China have sent a positive signal for the future of bilateral relations. With Malaysia celebrating ten years of the Belt and Road Initiative last year, it is important to examine the outcomes linked to future cooperation. As noted by Jamil (2023), while the previous Najib Razak administration was very open to the BRI project, the leadership of Mahathir Mohamad shifted by renegotiating multiple key BRI projects. The new government under Anwar Ibrahim may once again shift the country's stance on the BRI. Hence, it is crucial to examine how the media portrays the One Belt One Road initiative under different government administrations, as this is important for building the national image of China in Malaysia.

Numerous past and ongoing research endeavours aim to comprehend how the media shapes China's image and the One Belt One Road initiative. Some studies focus on comparing China's portrayal in Malaysian Malay newspapers (Hassan *et al.*, 2020), while others analyse TV news coverage of significant events such as Najib's visit to China (Ng, 2022), along with how Malaysian media portrays Chinese investment in projects like the Forest City Project (Wang & Reagan, 2020). Additionally, some research delves into how the One Belt One Road initiative is portrayed in Western newspapers (Bahoo & Alon, 2020) and compares framing analysis across multiple nations (Anunne *et al.*, 2019). Others explore perspectives from small and medium enterprises (SMEs) due to China's significant global impact on technology and development (Chin *et al.*, 2020). However, there has been limited exploration into how different Malaysian mainstream newspapers in various languages depict China's image and the representation of the One Belt One Road initiative across different language newspapers in the country. In Malaysia, English newspapers target educated Malaysians in urban areas, Malay newspapers cater to the Malay community, and Chinese newspapers appeal to the Chinese demographic. Therefore, it is crucial to examine the differences in how these newspapers portray China's image, especially concerning perceptions of the One Belt One Road initiative.

According to Kua (2015), racism remains a challenging issue in Malaysia, stemming from diverse cultural backgrounds, practices and demands among racial groups. Historical incidents like the 13 May 1969 political riot highlight the complexity of Malay-Chinese relations.

Malaysian Chinese may hold a favourable view of China due to ancestral ties, as mentioned by Soon (2023), who noted Najib Razak's assumption that Malaysian Chinese would inherently hold pro-China sentiments due to their ancestry and genetic ties. This assumption did not necessitate a thorough comprehension of China and the Chinese, in fact, such viewpoints were shared by many leaders in the country with diverse immigrant populations.

This study makes a significant contribution to understanding media framing and its impact on public perception in a multicultural and multilingual context like Malaysia. As the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) continues to influence geopolitical and economic dynamics, especially with the potential shift in direction and relations between Malaysia and China under the new government led by Anwar Ibrahim, it is crucial to understand how media representations in different languages shape public discourse and national attitudes toward China. The media act as the mouthpiece of the people, and by comparing the framing of the BRI across Chinese, Malay and English-language newspapers, this research reveals the subtle ways in which ethnic and cultural identities intersect with media reporting. As highlighted by Ng (2022), the coverage of Najib Razak's visit to China in Malay, Chinese and English media has been largely positive. However, since representation of the BRI in Malaysian media are shaped by the complex interplay of social, cultural and political factors, it is significant to examine how different media outlets reflect and influence perceptions of the initiative across different ethnic groups.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Belt and Road Initiative in Malaysia

Malaysia's engagement with China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has been profoundly influenced by the strategic leadership of its Prime Ministers: Tun Abdul Razak, Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, Najib Razak and Anwar Ibrahim. Each leader has played a pivotal role in shaping Malaysia's relationship with China, ensuring the country remains an active participant in this global initiative.

The foundation of Malaysia's involvement in the BRI can be traced back to Tun Abdul Razak, who established the groundwork for Malaysia-China relations. In 1974, amidst global uncertainty and regional apprehension towards China, Tun Abdul Razak took the decisive step of normalising

diplomatic relations with Beijing (Kee, 2024). This strategic move was motivated by the need to protect Malaysia's interests as Western powers began withdrawing their military presence from Southeast Asia (Kuik, 2024). Additionally, some analysts view this decision as a strategic effort to "pacify the ethnic Chinese" following the ethnic riots between Malays and Chinese and the introduction of the pro-Malay New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1971, which had significantly diminished the role of non-Malays in Malaysia's political and economic spheres (Baginda, 2002). The establishment of diplomatic ties with China was thus partly aimed at addressing the concerns of local Chinese voters. Under his leadership, Malaysia became the first ASEAN member state to establish formal diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China in May 1974 (Kuik, 2021).

Building on Razak's diplomatic foundation, Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad further strengthened Malaysia's relationship with China by emphasising economic cooperation during his first term as Prime Minister, from 1981 to 2003. As a visionary leader, Mahathir recognised the potential of China's rapid economic growth and sought to position Malaysia as a key partner in Asia's rise. He championed South-South cooperation and viewed China as a vital ally in promoting regional integration and economic collaboration (Chang, 2024). Over his 22 years in power, Mahathir visited China seven times. His first visit in November 1985 was particularly significant, focusing on enhancing bilateral economic ties as China was implementing its open door and reform policies (Lye, 2019). Besides, Mahathir underscored the shared "economic revolution" between Malaysia and China, aiming to tackle poverty, unemployment and underdevelopment (Liow, 2000).

In his second term as Prime Minister (2018–2020), Mahathir adopted a more cautious stance towards the BRI, reflecting concerns over Malaysia's sovereignty and the financial viability of some projects. According to Gerstl (2020), he halted several major BRI projects, including the East Coast Rail Link (ECRL), to reassess their impact on Malaysia's interests. Mahathir's pragmatic approach involved renegotiating key BRI agreements to better align with Malaysia's national priorities (Jaipragas, 2019). This careful balancing act allowed Malaysia to continue benefiting from the BRI while protecting its autonomy and economic stability.

Najib Razak, who succeeded Mahathir, played a pivotal role in deepening Malaysia's engagement with China. During his tenure (2009–2018), Najib actively pursued closer economic ties with China, which

included significant investments and trade agreements (Lim, 2009). Under Najib's leadership, Malaysia became China's largest trading partner in Southeast Asia by 2009, and the value of trade between both countries in 2022 was about 17.1 per cent of Malaysia's total global trade worth RM2.8 trillion (Voon, 2023). Najib's administration saw the elevation of bilateral relations to a "comprehensive strategic partnership" in 2013, reflecting a high level of mutual trust and cooperation (Ngeow, 2015). This period marked significant infrastructure investments, including the East Coast Rail Link and the Malaysia-China Kuantan Industrial Park, which were key components of the BRI (Ngeow, 2019).

Anwar Ibrahim, Malaysia's current Prime Minister, marks a new phase in the country's engagement with the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Renowned for his reformist approach and commitment to good governance, Anwar is guiding Malaysia's relationship with China amid a period of global uncertainty and shifting geopolitical landscapes (Daniel, 2023). In addition, the transition from Najib Razak's administration to the current government has left lingering effects. During the two years before Anwar's term, Mahathir Mohamad's government focused on addressing the challenges posed by previous issues, notably due to the 1MDB scandal and the legacy of project negotiations under Najib's administration (Abdullah *et al.*, 2020). This backdrop inevitably influences Anwar's approach. While there is currently optimism, Anwar has conveyed cautious hope for the future of Malaysia-China relations. He remarked in an interview, "I think the relationship between Malaysia and China, which extends to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, has a great future" (Xu & Zhang, 2023). Anwar's visit to China reflects optimism for future collaboration, and a senior Malaysian official has dismissed concerns about a "debt trap" associated with BRI projects (Chen & Bai, 2023). However, uncertainties remain, and long-term collaboration needs to be carefully monitored.

Although Malaysian leaders have consistently shown support for the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), some politicians have expressed concerns about the ruling party's close alignment with China (Wang *et al.*, 2023). Different leaders have had varying approaches during their time in office. For example, Najib Razak's administration was highly supportive of the BRI (Ngeow, 2019), while Mahathir Mohamad adopted a more neutral stance, focusing on national interests and viewing China as a significant market with potential business opportunities (Kuik, 2021). Anwar Ibrahim

currently maintains a positive outlook on the BRI, and his visit to China has been seen as a promising sign (Chen & Bai, 2023). However, it remains too early to forecast long-term outcomes due to ongoing uncertainties. Therefore, examining how the BRI is portrayed across Malaysian newspapers in different languages is crucial for understanding its impact in a multiracial country.

2.2 National Identity & Cultural Contact

Malaysia is a multiracial country comprising three main ethnic groups: Malay, Chinese and Indian, alongside other minority communities. According to Abdul Rahman (2002), the Malays and other *Bumiputera* groups are regarded as the indigenous people of the country, whereas the non-*Bumiputeras*, who largely migrated to Malaysia since the latter half of the 19th century, have become an essential part of Malaysian society and contribute significantly to its development. The diverse cultural landscape of Malaysia offers a unique context for examining how national identity and cultural contact shape the identities of these groups. Muhamad et al. (2023) emphasised that Malaysia's cultural traditions, passed down through generations, are heavily influenced by the country's origin story. Malaysia's cultural history, which dates back hundreds of years, positions the country as a crossroads for various major cultural traditions originating in archipelagic Southeast Asia, including influences from China, South Asia, the Middle East and the West.

A study by Che Mat (2010) reveals that while Arabic-Malay translations in Malaysia require adaptation to local contexts and national ideologies, deep-rooted connections with Arab nations remain significant due to the historical influence of Arabic civilisation on Malay culture, religion and language. This is supported by Abu Bakar *et al.* (2015), who found that Malay Muslim students from religious schools show strong interest in Arab culture, reflecting Arabic's association with Islam. Egypt and Saudi Arabia have long been key destinations for religious study, and early Malaysia-Middle East ties, as noted by Harun (2009), were heavily shaped by Islam, which also exposed Malays to broader political and social developments. Similarly, Punitha and Kumaran (2014) trace the migration of Indian ethnic groups to Malaya back to 1786 under British colonisation, with Kumaran (2011) noting their roles in agriculture and infrastructure, highlighting the enduring cultural legacy evident in the continuation of Tamil traditions among Malaysian Indians.

On the contrary, previous scholars have emphasised the close connection between the study of Chineseness among overseas Chinese and China itself. Wang (2009) explained that the strong connections between overseas Chinese and China are rooted in their memories of China, which shape their identity through aspects such as biology, origin, culture and tradition. While it is undeniable that local culture, legal constraints and political systems have influenced the notion of Chineseness, this prevents them from being considered “pure Chinese.” Yet, given that most of their ancestors migrated from China, the manifestation of Chineseness in each country is distinct yet still recognisable. An evident example is that overseas Chinese engage in cultural or religious practices commonly associated with Chinese traditions, such as adhering to Confucian principles and participating in ancestor worship (Clarke, 2000). Kang (2015) further points out that studies on ethnic Chinese primarily focus on migrants from Mainland China, including those who migrated to Southeast Asian countries and their descendants, who constitute a significant portion of Chinese re-migrants. Malaysia, historically one of the main destinations for Chinese migration, suggests that Malaysian Chinese may feel a closer affinity and familiarity with China compared to other ethnic groups in the country. According to Thean (2023), former Prime Ministers Abdul Razak and Mahathir perceived a profound and inseparable tie between the Chinese community and China that could not be easily severed. Additionally, Mahathir also acknowledged the significance of fostering relations with China before the general election to secure support from the Malaysian Chinese community. This again underscores the familiarity of overseas Chinese, including Malaysian Chinese, with China.

Regarding the portrayal of the Belt and Road Initiative, it is anticipated that Chinese newspapers may depict it differently compared to English and Malay newspapers due to the varying characteristics and backgrounds of their target audiences. This difference in portrayal further reflects the diverse perspectives within Malaysia’s multiracial society, influenced by each group’s unique historical and cultural ties.

2.3 Framing Analysis Across Languages

Framing theory explains how media coverage influences audience perception by shaping the context in which issues are presented. Journalists construct frames by emphasising specific aspects of an event, guiding public thought and opinion (Lee & Basnyat, 2012). Goffman (1974) describes frames as

interpretive structures or central storylines that give meaning to events. Entman (1993) further defines framing as the act of making certain elements of reality more salient to promote specific interpretations or solutions, while also warning that biased framing and selective sourcing can distort public understanding. This research applies framing theory to examine how source selection in media coverage influences the portrayal of the Belt and Road Initiative and shapes perceptions of China's image.

Many past researchers have demonstrated that media often contain ideological biases. In a study of the Malaysian policy on Teaching and Learning Science and Mathematics in English, and the announcement of the Upholding the Malay Language, Strengthening Command of English policy, Chew *et al.* (2012) observed that Malay and Chinese newspapers approached coverage and framing differently. Specifically, Malay newspapers placed a greater emphasis on conflict framing when reporting on the issue of teaching science and mathematics in English policy compared to the matter of upholding the Malay language while strengthening command of English policy. In contrast, Chinese newspapers covered both issues in similar ways. Likewise, John (2015) found that the incorporation of Malay words and phrases in English newspaper advertisements in Malaysia signifies a distinct ideology, specifically a Malay-Muslim ideology, its values and culture, representing the Malay ethnic group and serving as government propaganda. Another study on the Tanjung Piai By-Election by Fernandez *et al.* (2023) yielded similar findings, showing that newspapers in different languages provided varying degrees of coverage, utilised different predominant sources, frames and valence of articles, reflecting the divergent portrayal of Pakatan Harapan and Mahathir Mohamad. This demonstrates that ethnic newspapers serve the purpose of advocating for and upholding the interests of their respective communities.

Newspapers in Malaysia are tailored towards the various languages and are tailored to specific ethnic groups. In this study, Malaysian newspapers, catering to different languages and ethnic groups, may frame the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and China's image differently, reflecting the distinct perspectives of the country's major communities.

3. Methodology

This research utilises a content analysis approach to study how the Malaysian mainstream newspapers portray the BRI. According to *Adqrates*'s

official website, one of the world's first programmatic advertising platforms founded by a team of media and marketing professionals, the top-circulating newspapers in English, Malay and Chinese are *The Star*, with a circulation of 248,559; *Sin Chew Daily*, with a circulation of 251,000; and *Harian Metro*, which is the most visited Malay newspaper site with a circulation of 100,000. This justifies the selection of these three newspapers for this study.

To gain deeper insights into the representation of Malay ethnicity, this study also includes *Utusan Malaysia*, which has an 80-year history and maintains a close relationship with the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO). This political party often asserts that it represents the interests of Malay groups in the country (Sukumaran, 2019; Lopez, 2009). The inclusion of *Utusan Malaysia* is particularly significant given its historical context and its role in shaping perceptions within the Malay community, which constitutes the majority in Malaysia.

The news from the four newspapers over the last seven years, specifically from 2017 to 2023, was analysed. The process began by entering relevant keywords such as “Belt and Road,” “Silk Road Economic Belt,” “China-Malaysia relations,” “One-China Policy,” “East Coast Rail Link (ECRL),” “ASEAN-China,” and “Xiamen University Malaysia Campus” into the search function on the official websites of the mentioned newspapers. The articles were then downloaded and analysed.

The process of content analysis began by analysing 20 per cent of the total articles. After that, the themes were operationalised and defined. “Others” is included in the coding sheet to capture issues that might not fall under any identified theme. The analysis was conducted using a coding sheet that emphasised segments, headlines and keywords related to the themes (see conceptual definition of each theme in Appendix). Each news article was meticulously read and analysed to assess the issues that occurred under the identified themes. Subsequently, a chi-square test was conducted using IBM SPSS 29 software.

In total, 2,284 news articles were analysed over the three months (*The Star*: 915 articles, *Harian Metro*: 196 articles, *Utusan Malaysia*: 170, and *Sin Chew Daily*: 1,003 articles). The breakdown of articles is as follows:

Table 1: Sample Distribution of Analysed News Articles

Number of News Articles (Year 2017-2023)	English Newspaper	Malay Newspapers		Chinese Newspaper
	<i>The Star</i>	<i>Utusan Malaysia</i>	<i>Harian Metro</i>	<i>Sin Chew Daily</i>
Total	915	170	196	1,003

Additionally, the news articles were categorised by segments. *Sin Chew Daily* and the two Malay newspapers featured more national news compared to *The Star*, which placed a greater focus on international news (see Table 2 below).

Table 2: News Segment Categories by Newspaper

News Segment	<i>The Star</i>	<i>Utusan Malaysia</i>	<i>Harian Metro</i>	<i>Sin Chew Daily</i>
National	201 (22%)	111 (65.3%)	171 (87.24%)	682 (68%)
International	563 (61.5%)	37 (21.8%)	24 (12.24%)	221 (22.03%)
Opinion Piece	151 (16.5%)	22 (12.9%)	1 (0.51%)	100 (9.97%)
Total	915 (100%)	170 (100%)	196 (100%)	1,003 (100%)

4. Findings

All four newspapers portrayed the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) differently. This indicates that the English, Malay and Chinese newspapers have different agendas in covering news related to China's BRI. The results can be found in the following tables.

Table 3: Types of News

Types of News	<i>The Star</i>	<i>Utusan Malaysia</i>	<i>Harian Metro</i>	<i>Sin Chew Daily</i>
ASEAN	232 (25%)	18 (11%)	13 (6.6%)	26 (2.6%)
Economy	81 (8.9%)	13 (7.6%)	41 (21%)	150 (15%)
Politics	27 (3%)	5 (2.9%)	15 (7.7%)	14 (1.4%)
Culture	21 (2.3%)	6 (3.5%)	9 (4.6%)	249 (25%)
Education	6 (0.7%)	5 (2.9%)	5 (2.6%)	139 (14%)
Technology	32 (3.5%)	7 (4.1%)	14 (7.1%)	60 (6%)
Partnership	79 (8.6%)	28 (16%)	34 (17%)	159 (16%)
International Collaboration & Superpower	278 (30%)	19 (11%)	6 (3.1%)	89 (8.9%)

International Criticism & Problems	25 (2.7%)	9 (5.3%)	0 (0%)	10 (1%)
Mixed Topics (Opinion Based Analysis)	12 (1.3%)	1 (0.6%)	0 (0%)	24 (2.4%)
ECRL's Discussion & Progress	116 (13%)	57 (34%)	58 (30%)	72 (7.2%)
Others	6 (0.7%)	2 (1.2%)	1 (0.5%)	11 (1.1%)
Total	915 (100%)	170 (100%)	196 (100%)	1,003 (100%)

Table 3 demonstrates that the four newspapers focused on different aspects of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). For example, *The Star* emphasised international and ASEAN collaboration, focusing on projects that could benefit from the BRI, such as railway construction between ASEAN countries like Thailand, Myanmar and Cambodia, and partnerships with nations like Russia, Kenya and African countries. On the other hand, *Harian Metro* and *Utusan Malaysia* concentrated on the East Coast Rail Link (ECRL), particularly discussing its challenges and ongoing efforts related to the BRI. This was especially prevalent during Mahathir Mohamad's second tenure when Malaysia was burdened with the 1MDB debt, leading to frequent news articles debating the high costs and feasibility of continuing the BRI, along with its potential benefits and drawbacks. Meanwhile, *Sin Chew Daily*, with its predominantly Chinese readership and cultural focus, extensively covered cultural matters, alongside emphasising partnerships with China, such as Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) signings between Malaysian and Chinese corporations and universities.

Table 4: Chi-Square Tests of Types of News

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	952.733 ^a	33	<.001
Likelihood Ratio	987.612	33	<.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.800	1	.028
N of Valid Cases	2284		

a. 7 cells (14.6%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.49.

Table 4 above shows a chi-square test conducted to understand the relationship between the six different types of news. The p-value of <0.001 indicates a significant difference between the types of news covered in *The Star*, *Utusan Malaysia*, *Harian Metro* and *Sin Chew Daily*.

4.1 Chinese Newspaper

4.1.1 Chinese Culture Inheritance and Roots of Overseas Chinese

In its coverage of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), *Sin Chew Daily* often links the initiative to the preservation and promotion of Chinese culture, a perspective rarely seen in Malay and English newspapers. The newspaper often employs keywords such as “bridge” (桥梁纽带), “kinship” (血缘) and “seeking roots” (寻根). Additionally, the term “fate” (缘分) is used to illustrate the historical and cultural bonds between Malaysia and China, emphasising the unique identity of Malaysian Chinese, which is deeply connected to their ancestral roots and migration from China (see Appendix: Paragraph 1).

The newspaper also emphasised how Malaysian Chinese preserve the culture and practices passed down from their ancestors in China, highlighting their spiritual connection to being Chinese and their responsibility to develop and promote Chinese culture within the country. This is rarely reported by English and Malay newspapers (see Appendix: Paragraph 2).

In addition to Chinese newspaper, the term “Chinese language” and “Chinese culture” (中华文化) are also often highlighted in *Sin Chew Daily*, emphasising the importance of culture, especially when compared to *The Star* and *Harian Metro*. It is noted that Malaysia is the country with the most comprehensive preservation of the Chinese language among Southeast Asian countries (see Appendix: Paragraph 3).

A report even noted that Malaysia is the place outside of Greater China where Chinese culture is most fully preserved, as people can easily communicate in Chinese and various southern Chinese dialects (see Appendix: Paragraph 4).

Furthermore, the preservation of Chinese culture is reflected in the study of Chinese poetry and history, serving as a means of connecting with China while enriching the cultural identity of the Chinese community in Malaysia. Chinese poetry, with its rich imagery and profound themes, provides insights into the values and philosophies of the Chinese people. Engaging with

both classical and contemporary works allows individuals to appreciate the nuances of the language and the beauty of poetic expression, fostering a deeper understanding of their heritage (see Appendix: Paragraph 5).

The connection between Malaysia and China goes beyond merely referencing the Chinese language or Chinese poetry; it also encompasses ritual practices and music, such as Chinese drumming. Of greater importance is the preservation of the spirit and core values of Chinese culture, which further illustrates the strong relationship and ties between Malaysia and China (see Appendix: Paragraph 6 & 7).

4.2 English Newspaper

4.2.1 International and ASEAN Collaboration

The Star prominently features international news compared to Malay and Chinese newspapers, with a particular focus on international relations and ASEAN-related issues tied to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) projects. It outlines the BRI's objectives, which were initially known as the "Land Silk Road" and the "Maritime Silk Road." These goals aim to enhance connectivity between China, Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Europe, while also fostering mutual understanding, cooperation and strengthening regional integration. This is not frequently reported by the Malay and Chinese newspapers (see Appendix: Paragraph 8).

The newspaper also covered the expansion and progress of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), noting that it has now extended to over 120 countries worldwide, highlighting the project's widespread success. This broad reach demonstrates China's ability to establish strong partnerships across continents, enhancing trade routes and infrastructure. The BRI's growing influence signifies not only its success in improving global connectivity but also China's increasing role as a major economic power shaping international development through strategic investments and collaborations with diverse nations (see Appendix: Paragraph 9).

The success of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is also reflected in reports on collaborative projects, including maritime, rail and road developments, with numerous countries across Africa, Asia, Europe and ASEAN nations like Myanmar. These efforts are integral to China's broader economic strategy and its ambition to enhance regional connectivity (see Appendix: Paragraph 10).

The benefits of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) are also highlighted in numerous articles, which showcase how the initiative has positively impacted the economies and development of participating countries (see Appendix: Paragraph 11).

In addition to highlighting international collaboration and dialogues, the English newspaper also focuses on the strong ties between China and ASEAN countries such as Cambodia, Indonesia and Thailand. These efforts reflect the celebration of years of dialogue relations between China and ASEAN emphasising their commitment to fostering economic growth, regional stability and cooperation across Southeast Asia (see Appendix: Paragraph 12).

This is evident in several news articles covering dialogues with ASEAN countries, such as Cambodia, which has experienced positive changes from its collaboration with China (see Appendix: Paragraph 13).

The Star also draws attention to various challenges associated with the BRI, such as the high costs of constructing railways that connect China with other countries. The issue of debt traps, which has been a concern for several countries internationally, is also widely discussed. These concerns are featured more frequently in *The Star* compared to coverage in Malay and Chinese newspapers (see Appendix: Paragraph 14).

4.3 Malay Newspaper

4.3.1 ECRL's Progress & Malaysia-China Partnership

Malay newspapers have closely followed the progress of the East Coast Rail Link (ECRL), a significant project connecting China and Malaysia. The ECRL faced a temporary halt in 2018 when the new government led by Mahathir Mohamad initiated a review of the project. This review was prompted by concerns over the project's high costs and the financial difficulties inherited from the previous administration under Najib Razak, particularly the debts associated with the 1MDB scandal. This is reported by both English and Chinese newspapers, however their focus leaned more towards other issues rather than the ECRL itself (see Appendix: Paragraph 15 & 16).

Additionally, *Harian Metro* and *Utusan Malaysia* frequently provided updates on discussions surrounding the ECRL. Several reports highlighted the potential benefits of continuing the project, emphasising its potential

to boost trade and contribute to a more prosperous future. Other articles focused on the current government's efforts, led by Anwar Ibrahim, particularly concerning negotiations about the project's prospects and the associated construction costs (see Appendix: Paragraph 17 & 18).

Additionally, Malay newspapers highlighted the collaboration and partnership between China and Malaysia during Najib Razak's tenure, which emphasised discussions about various mega projects and investments under the Belt and Road Initiative. While Mahathir Mohamad had to re-evaluate the ECRL project due to concerns over high costs, the importance of maintaining strong trade and investment ties remained crucial, especially considering China's status as a technologically advanced nation (see Appendix: Paragraph 19 & 20).

The current government under Anwar Ibrahim has further solidified the relationship between Malaysia and China through diplomatic engagements. Both *Harian Metro* and *Utusan Malaysia* have underscored the Prime Minister's confidence regarding collaboration with China in various fields, particularly in education and investment, which are anticipated to boost the country's economy (see Appendix: Paragraph 21 & 22).

5. Discussions

The findings reveal that English, Malay and Chinese newspapers offer distinct perspectives on China's Belt and Road Initiative. Each newspaper's framing of the BRI is influenced by its cultural, political and economic context.

Chinese newspapers primarily focus on cultural inheritance, emphasising the Chinese language, practices and beliefs. Soon (2023) highlighted the use of China-Malaysia relations as a political campaign strategy, where leaders perceived a preference among the Chinese community for China. Hall (2005) supports this, stating that meaning-making is rooted in cultural and political contexts. Chinese newspapers cater to an audience with a Chinese background, who maintain a strong connection with China. In contrast, Malay and English newspapers provide minimal coverage of cultural themes.

Malay newspapers predominantly emphasise the East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) project. *Harian Metro* and *Utusan Malaysia* highlight the project's suspension during Mahathir Mohamad's tenure due to debt concerns and its subsequent revival under Anwar Ibrahim with cost-reduction strategies. According to Wong (2025), the ECRL is a landmark BRI project enhancing

regional connectivity and represents a milestone in Malaysia-China economic and infrastructure collaboration. Malay newspapers reflect government narratives and the interests of Malay policymakers. Razak (2020) stated that *Utusan Malaysia* is currently owned by Media Mulia Sdn. Bhd., previously linked to UMNO through the Utusan Group. The paper ceased operations in 2019 due to a prolonged financial crisis, and the new ownership may further influence its coverage. Besides, these newspapers also emphasise partnership and collaboration, covering visits by Malaysian and Chinese leaders. Ng (2022) noted similar positive portrayals in TV coverage of Najib Razak's 2016 visit to China. Han (2024) observed that ties remain strong, with increased diplomatic activity ahead of key bilateral anniversaries. *Utusan Malaysia* and *Harian Metro* thus align closely with government perspectives and national interests.

In contrast, English newspapers such as *The Star* focus on the international aspects of the BRI. Catering to an English-proficient, educated audience, *The Star* emphasises ASEAN collaboration, economic development and international trade benefits. It features supportive views from ASEAN leaders, including those from Vietnam and Brunei, and global figures like Vladimir Putin. Nevertheless, unlike Chinese and Malay newspapers, *The Star* tends to discuss the problems and issues that have arisen from BRI projects. Some international news pieces highlight issues and challenges associated with the Belt and Road Initiative, such as debt problems and concerns about the efficacy of resolving these issues. For instance, Wu (2023) linked BRI projects to criminal activity, and Mai *et al.* (2024) found that Western media often present negative portrayals. Wong and Areddy (2018) also noted concerns over BRI-induced debt crises in poorer nations.

Overall, gaining insight into how newspapers across languages depict the BRI is essential for understanding Malaysian perceptions, which in turn influence future bilateral relations and cooperation strategies between Malaysia and China. Each language newspaper represents distinct ethnic voices in the country, thereby shaping perceptions of the BRI and China. To summarise the findings, most newspapers primarily emphasise issues related to partnerships in their coverage of China's BRI. However, it can be assumed that Malays and other ethnic groups not targeted by Chinese-language newspapers or unfamiliar with the Mandarin language may have a limited understanding of China or Chinese culture, given the focus on international

collaboration and national projects rather than cultural aspects. Conversely, Malay-language newspapers tend to highlight collaborative projects like the ECRL as well as partnership-related issues. On the other hand, English language newspapers provide a more international perspective and discuss broader international and ASEAN-related issues under the BRI. These differing media approaches underscore the importance of understanding diverse perspectives within Malaysia's multicultural society, as they shape public discourse and perceptions of China-Malaysia collaboration.

The Belt and Road Initiative has significantly increased China's economic presence in Malaysia, with China involved in numerous major infrastructure and cultural projects related to the BRI. The paper recommends that China actively engage with various stakeholders worldwide, including global leaders, the media and policymakers, to better communicate the initiative's vision and mission, especially given ongoing concerns about China's intentions and the risk of narratives around imperialism and neo-colonialism. Although Malaysia has consistently supported the BRI, political instability has affected the progress of some BRI projects. While Malaysia will continue to support the BRI, it is unlikely to pursue additional costly mega-infrastructure projects. Instead, Malaysia is expected to be more open to digital connectivity projects under the BRI, which align with the country's technological development goals. The Belt and Road Initiative is expected to strengthen China-Malaysia relations, with China's industrial overcapacity fuelling infrastructure investments in Malaysia, which need such international collaborations for its own economic growth. However, challenges to deepening China-Malaysia relations include Malaysia's political instability, ethnic tensions, China's economic slowdown and the geopolitical dynamics of the South China Sea. Furthermore, it is crucial to recognise that in a multi-ethnic country like Malaysia, individuals from different ethnic backgrounds may have varying understandings of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The perspectives of policymakers from these diverse ethnic groups, along with their roles as media sources, significantly influence how the BRI is portrayed and how public perceptions are shaped.

6. Conclusion

Malaysia's multicultural society heavily influences its relationship with China and shapes broader dynamics within ASEAN and Asia. This diversity is reflected in Malaysia's population, which comprises Malays, Chinese,

Indians and other ethnic groups, each maintaining distinct identities rooted in language, beliefs and practices. However, Malaysians are not yet very familiar with the BRI. Although they may have heard about it, many do not fully understand what it entails. In addition, the level of engagement in BRI-related activities is low. Greater efforts are needed to enhance the visibility of the BRI, particularly through social media, in order to promote a better understanding of the initiative. News coverage in Malay newspapers is relatively limited compared with Chinese and English newspapers. Overall, the findings indicate a positive perception of the benefits of the BRI, especially in the economic sector. This is consistent with Cheng et al. (2019), who noted that the BRI is viewed as an initiative that would benefit Malaysia in its economic, cultural and educational development.

To further solidify Malaysia's relationship with China, especially considering the diverse perspectives within the country, a few strategic actions are recommended:

Firstly, strengthening public engagement and dialogue is essential. Beyond merely involving representatives from various ethnic communities, Malaysia could benefit from establishing formal platforms for regular dialogue between government officials, community leaders and the general public. These platforms would provide a structured environment to discuss the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in greater detail, ensuring that every community gains a clear understanding of its objectives and benefits. By facilitating open conversations, these forums would help to address any lingering misconceptions or concerns that different groups might have. Such engagement would not only foster a shared vision for Malaysia's role in the initiative but also enhance the transparency and inclusivity of Malaysia's approach to international collaborations, particularly with China.

Secondly, enhancing media consistency is crucial in shaping public perception and understanding of the BRI. Given the significant role that the media plays in influencing public opinion, it is vital for Malaysia's news outlets, particularly those in English and Malay, to report on the BRI with greater consistency and clarity. The government could play a proactive role by encouraging or collaborating with media houses to produce detailed and balanced reports that highlight both the opportunities and challenges associated with the BRI. This could involve creating in-depth features, conducting interviews with experts, and providing coverage on how BRI projects are impacting local communities. Such efforts would ensure that the

narrative surrounding the BRI is accessible and relevant to all Malaysians, thereby promoting a more informed and cohesive public discourse.

Lastly, fostering inter-ethnic understanding and unity is imperative for the success of international initiatives like the BRI and for the overall harmony of Malaysian society. Improving relations between the Malaysian Chinese community and other ethnic groups is particularly important, given the Chinese community's strong cultural and historical ties to China. Chinese-language newspapers reflect a deeper understanding of China's culture and practices, which underscores the need for greater cross-cultural awareness. In this context, Malaysian Chinese newspapers and the Chinese community can play a pivotal role in promoting collaboration between different ethnic groups, such as through joint community projects or cultural exchange programs, which may help bridge gaps and foster a more comprehensive understanding of China.

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Appendix

Conceptual Operationalisation

Themes	Explanation
ASEAN	Issues related to ASEAN countries. (e.g., Thailand-China Partnership)
Economy	Issues related to economy, business and investment (e.g., BRI helps to boost FDI in the country)
Politics	Issues related to political matters (e.g., China should support Palestine during the war with Israel, aligning with stance of Malaysia)
Culture	Issues related to Chinese culture (e.g., Chinese temple inheritance that ties to Chinese ancestor from China)
Education	Issues related to education (e.g., the exchange of knowledge between China scholars and Malaysian scholars)
Technology	Issues related to China being a high technology country (e.g., China AI and automobile collaboration)
Partnership	Issues related to collaboration (e.g., signing MOUs with Chinese industries and the Chinese government)
International Collaboration & Superpower	Issues regarding international collaborations between countries that are not under ASEAN. This theme also highlights the intention of the BRI and China’s expansion of power (e.g., Rusia’s collaboration with China threatening America)
International Criticism & Problems	Issues related to problems and challenges behind the BRI (e.g., debt traps due to the high costs of the BRI)
Mixed Topics (Opinion Based Analysis)	Issues mention a mixture of topics instead of focusing on one (e.g., columnists’ analyses of the advantages and drawbacks of the BRI)
ECRL’s Discussion & Progress	Issues updating on Malaysia ECRL’s progress (e.g., cancellation and progress of the railway construction)
Others	Any other topics that do not fall under any of the identified themes (e.g., BRI and environmental issues)

Data Translation

(Paragraph 1) 中国驻马来西亚新大使白天说，他来马短短10天，深刻感受到马来西亚华人对祖籍国的热情，热爱和对中马关系坚强有力的支持。

Translation: China's new ambassador stated that in just 10 days since his arrival in Malaysia, he has deeply felt the enthusiasm, love and strong support of the Malaysian Chinese community for their ancestral homeland and the strong Malaysia-China relations.

(白天：来马短...9 December 2017)

(Paragraph 2) 我国华社对华教和中华文化永续的传承与捍卫，可说是中国以外发展得最完整和健全的国家。他说，在不同籍贯华人的共同努力下，中华文化在我国的发展与发扬，很多时候可说是“比中国还要中国”。“这是因为大马华人是以跨籍贯和宗教信仰的方式，共同来保护和传承中华文化。

Translation: The Malaysian Chinese community's commitment to the preservation and defence of Chinese education and culture can be said to be the most comprehensive and robust development outside of China. He stated that through the collective efforts of Chinese Malaysians from various ancestral backgrounds, the development and promotion of Chinese culture in Malaysia, at times, can even be considered “more Chinese than China itself.” “This is because Malaysian Chinese, regardless of ancestral origins or religious beliefs, come together to jointly protect and pass on Chinese culture.

(吴添泉：两国...19 August 2023)

(Paragraph 3) 中国以外的海外华人超过4000万人，东南亚就占其中80%，唯有大马保留华文教育的国家；华文教育从来没有在大马断根，逾200年来也一直在我国扎根向上发展。

Translation: There are over 40 million overseas Chinese outside of China, with Southeast Asia accounting for 80% of that number. Malaysia is the only country that preserves Chinese language education; Chinese education has never been uprooted in Malaysia and has been established and developed here for over 200 years.

(充作综合教...20 September 2019)

(Paragraph 4) 国内随处可看到中文，人们方便用中文、甚至是中国南部的多种方言沟通，马来西亚是除大中华地区以外，保留中华文化最完整的地方，包括国内华小有30%的友族就读，可轻易和大中华地区进行接轨。

Translation: Chinese is widely visible throughout the country, and people can comfortably communicate in Chinese, including many dialects from southern China. Malaysia is noted for preserving Chinese culture more completely than anywhere outside Greater China. This preservation is reflected in the fact that 30% of students in Chinese primary schools are from non-Chinese ethnic groups, facilitating strong connections with the Greater China region.

(世林恳亲会千人宴...12 November 2023)

(Paragraph 5) 为促进马中两国文学交流，由中国作家协会与马来西亚汉文化中心联合发起成立的马来西亚中国文学读者俱乐部，将于8月17日下午4时，通过线上同时举行世界共12个国家“中国文学读者俱乐部”成立典礼。

Translation: To promote literary exchange between Malaysia and China, the Malaysian Chinese Literature Readers Club, jointly initiated by the China Writers Association and the Malaysian Chinese Cultural Centre, will hold its establishment ceremony online on August 17 at 4 p.m., coinciding with the formation of “Chinese Literature Readers Clubs” in a total of 12 countries worldwide.

(12国设中国文学...14 August 2021)

(Paragraph 6) 从中华文化汲取养分的这门艺术，如今不止是本地大小文化活动的常见表演，在有志者的推动下，从在地耕耘，再走入中国校园“播种”，后来更让廿四节令鼓传播到国外。

Translation: This art form, which draws nourishment from Chinese culture, is now not only a common performance at local cultural events but has also been promoted by enthusiastic individuals. It has transitioned from local cultivation to “sowing” in Chinese schools, and eventually led to the dissemination of the Twenty-Four Solar Terms Drum internationally.

(北野鼓扎根...12 June 2020)

(Paragraph 7) 中华独中始终秉持“礼、义、廉、耻”中华传统文化核心理念，以其雄厚实力、优良环境、严谨治学，成为马来西亚民办教育的典范之一，在传承弘扬中华优秀传统文化、促进中马友好关系发展等方面做出了积极贡献。

Translation: Chinese independent schools have always upheld the core values of Chinese traditional culture, namely “Li, Yi, Lian and Chi” (礼、义、廉、耻). With their strong capabilities, excellent environment and rigorous academic standards, they have become one of the models of private education in Malaysia. These schools have made significant contributions to preserving and promoting outstanding Chinese culture and fostering the development of friendly relations between China and Malaysia.

(林景清：只差...17 December 2023)

(Paragraph 8) BRI is the impetus behind a revival of the ancient Land Silk Road along Central Asia, connecting East and West, and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road – sea routes that wind through South-East Asia to Africa and beyond.

(*One Belt, One Road...15 June 2019*)

(Paragraph 9) Today, it already links more than 120 countries and about 4½ billion of the world’s population. Its development platform is multilateral in nature; aimed at boosting inclusive global growth as well as strengthening cooperation between China and international organisations to enhance multilateral cooperation, serving as China’s contribution to the world economy and global governance, through dialogue and collaboration.

(*One Belt, One Road...15 June 2019*)

(Paragraph 10) China’s monetary flex is already apparent thanks to its “One Belt, One Road” initiative – an expansive vision for maritime, rail and road projects across Asia, Africa and Europe that features Myanmar prominently.

(*Myanmar economy...4 February 2021*)

(Paragraph 11) The East African country has witnessed the positive changes brought by China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which marks the 10th anniversary this year since its inception.

(*Feature: 10 years...18 October 2023*)

(Paragraph 12) China and ASEAN have more deeply realised the importance of promoting the building of a new community with a shared future.

(China-ASEAN strategic...8 September 2020)

(Paragraph 13) Ten years on, China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has had a tremendous impact on Cambodia, injecting strong momentum into the kingdom's development of infrastructure, trade and economy.

(China's BRI has...13 October 2023)

(Paragraph 14) Many projects under the multibillion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative have stalled because of the global health crisis but that is not its only problem, analysts say..... Beijing has been accused of pushing developing nations into debt traps and of using the scheme as a foil for increasing its political leverage around the world.

(China turns on charm...19 October 2023)

(Paragraph 15) *Projek ECRL yang dicadangkan pentadbiran Najib mencetuskan kontroversi berikutan kosnya yang mencecah hingga RM70 bilion....Dr Mahathir sebelum ini menolak projek itu sambil menyifatkannya sebagai kontrak 'pelik' kerana negara perlu membiayainya dengan pinjaman dari China, selain mengupah kontraktor dari negara itu.*

Translation: The ECRL project proposed by Najib's administration sparked controversy due to its estimated cost of RM70 billion. Dr. Mahathir previously rejected the project, labeling it a "strange" contract because the country would need to finance it through loans from China while hiring contractors from that nation.

Harian Metro (22 August 2018)

(Paragraph 16) *Projek infrastruktur mega, Satu Jalur Satu Laluan oleh China berdepan halangan selepas beberapa negara mengadu 'tertimbus' di bawah bebanan hutang Beijing.*

Translation: China's mega infrastructure project, One Belt One Road, faces obstacles after several countries complained of being 'buried' under the weight of Beijing's debt.

Utusan Malaysia (3 September 2019)

(Paragraph 17) *Kerajaan negeri Pahang gembira dengan kemajuan semasa projek ECRL itu, dan percaya apabila siap kelak, ia akan dapat membantu meningkatkan pelaburan, mendorong aktiviti komersial, menambah peluang pekerjaan dan menarik lebih banyak aktiviti pelancongan di negeri Pahang.*

Translation: The Pahang state government is pleased with the current progress of the ECRL project and believes that once completed, it will help boost investments, drive commercial activities, create more job opportunities, and attract more tourism activities to the state of Pahang.

Harian Metro (22 January 2021)

(Paragraph 18) *Penjimatan RM11.01 bilion bagi kos pembinaan Projek Laluan Rel Pantai Timur (ECRL) 3.0 berjaya dicapai hasil rundingan semula kontrak yang dimuktamadkan pada tahun 2019 dan 2022..... Kementerian Pengangkutan berkata, beberapa faktor termasuk pelaksanaan kejuruteraan nilai (VM) yang menyeluruh dan penjajaran semula landasan ECRL pada Seksyen C (Temerloh-Serendah-Pelabuhan Klang) telah menyumbang kepada pengurangan kos pembinaan keseluruhan.*

Translation: A savings of RM11.01 billion for the construction costs of the East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) 3.0 has been achieved as a result of contract renegotiations finalised in 2019 and 2022.....The Ministry of Transport stated that several factors contributed to the overall reduction in construction costs, including the comprehensive implementation of value engineering (VM) and the realignment of the ECRL track in Section C (Temerloh-Serendah-Port Klang).

Utusan Malaysia (23 December 2022)

(Paragraph 19) *Perdana Menteri Datuk Seri Najib Razak semalam menyertai mesyuarat meja bulat Forum Jalur dan Laluan Untuk Kerjasama Antarabangsa di sini.....Perbincangan meja bulat disertai oleh pemimpin negara dan kerajaan dari 28 buah negara yang terbabit dalam Inisiatif Jalur dan Laluan, sebuah gagasan yang bertujuan menyediakan infrastruktur mega untuk dagangan antarabangsa.....Malaysia turut komited terhadap inisiatif itu hingga mencetuskan beberapa projek infrastruktur seperti Laluan Rel Pantai Timur, pembesaran pelabuhan serta pembinaan bandar moden.*

Translation: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak participated in the roundtable meeting of the Belt and Road Forum for International

Cooperation yesterday. The roundtable discussions included leaders from 28 countries involved in the Belt and Road Initiative, which aims to provide mega infrastructure for international trade. Malaysia remains committed to this initiative, leading to several infrastructure projects such as the East Coast Rail Link, port expansions and the development of modern cities.

Harian Metro (16 May 2017)

(Paragraph 20) *China bersedia memperkukuh kesalinghubungan perdagangan dua hala dengan Malaysia serta membolehkan kemasukan lebih banyak produk-produk negara ini untuk bersaing dalam pasarannya.....Duta China ke Malaysia, Bai Tian berkata, antara bidang yang boleh dibincangkan secara mendalam termasuk kewangan dan pertanian yang bernilai tinggi. “Kita juga boleh meninjau penyertaan dalam industri dan perniagaan baharu seperti e-dagang, kecerdasan buatan (AI) dan membangunkan pusat pertumbuhan baharu bagi kerjasama Malaysia-China.*

Translation: China is ready to strengthen bilateral trade connectivity with Malaysia and facilitate the entry of more Malaysian products to compete in its market. The Chinese Ambassador to Malaysia, Bai Tian, stated that areas for in-depth discussions could include high-value sectors like finance and agriculture. “We can also explore participation in new industries and businesses such as e-commerce, artificial intelligence (AI), and develop new growth centers for Malaysia-China cooperation.

Utusan Malaysia (29 July 2019)

(Paragraph 21) *Malaysia bersetuju meningkatkan pelbagai kerjasama dengan China mencakupi pelbagai aspek termasuk pelaburan, pendidikan dan sebagainya.....Perdana Menteri, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim berkata, ini susulan kunjungan hormat selama sejam oleh Pengerusi Jawatankuasa Tetap Kongres Rakyat Kebangsaan (NPC) China ke-14, Zhao Leji ke Malaysia, semalam yang disertai beberapa menteri Kabinet.*

Translation: Malaysia has agreed to enhance various collaborations with China, covering multiple aspects such as investment, education, and more. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim stated that this agreement follows a courtesy visit of one hour by Zhao Leji, the Chairman of the Standing Committee of the 14th National People’s Congress (NPC) of China, to Malaysia yesterday, which was attended by several Cabinet ministers.

Utusan Malaysia (21 May 2023)

(Paragraph 22) *Kerajaan China terus memberikan keutamaan untuk meningkatkan kerjasama dua hala dengan Malaysia terutama bagi menangani cabaran semasa yang dihadapi kedua-dua negara hari ini seperti inflasi global dan keselamatan makanan.*

Translation: The Chinese government continues to prioritise strengthening bilateral cooperation with Malaysia, particularly in addressing current challenges faced by both countries, such as global inflation and food security.

Harian Metro (12 July 2022)