

President hails Brunei proposal

Xi praises idea of talks to handle disputes, safeguard stability of the South China Sea

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China appreciates Brunei's proposal to handle disputes via peaceful negotiations between the countries involved and safeguard the stability of the South China Sea through efforts jointly made by the countries of the region, President Xi Jinping said on Nov 19.

Xi made the remark while meeting with Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah in Brunei's capital, Bandar Seri Begawan, during his state visit to the country.

Safeguarding peace and stability of the South China Sea is related to the interests of China and Brunei, and it is also the common wish of both countries, Xi said.

The two countries should continue to promote maritime cooperation and build the South China Sea into a sea of peace, friendship and cooperation, Xi added.

Before their talks, the sultan hosted a grand ceremony to welcome Xi. After their talks, the two countries agreed to establish a strategic cooperative partnership. The two nations issued a joint declaration and signed a number of cooperation documents.

Mentioning that it is his first visit to Brunei, Xi said he was deeply moved by the sincere smiles on the faces of the young people who welcomed him along the road.

China and Brunei, with a long his-



President Xi Jinping is accompanied by Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah at a welcoming ceremony on Nov 19 in Brunei's capital, Bandar Seri Begawan, during his state visit to the country. JU PENG / XINHUA

tory of cultural exchanges, are not only close neighbors separated by the sea, but also trustworthy friends and partners, Xi said.

Xi said the two countries should enhance high-level exchanges to pro-

vide guidance for the development of bilateral relations.

China appreciates Brunei's firm stance on supporting the one-China policy, Xi said, adding that China will continue to support Brunei in

developing a path that fits its own national situation.

China deems Brunei an important partner to build the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, and the two countries should connect develop-

ment strategies to enhance mutually beneficial cooperation, Xi said.

The president welcomed Bruneian companies to expand exports to China, saying that China would like to enhance cooperation with Brunei in infrastructure, agriculture, fisheries and energy.

The two countries should enhance coordination under such frameworks as the United Nations and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, and jointly promote the development of relations between China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Xi said.

The sultan welcomed Xi's visit, saying that it would deepen traditional friendship and promote mutually beneficial cooperation between the two countries.

He reaffirmed Brunei's firm stance on upholding the one-China policy. Brunei would like to take the opportunity of the visit to enhance bilateral cooperation in such areas as trade, investment, agriculture, tourism, education, people-to-people visits and justice to bring benefits to the people of both nations, he said.

Brunei would like to connect development strategies with China, he said, adding that Brunei spoke highly of China's role in promoting the stability of the world.

It is good for Brunei to see that countries in the region have jointly maintained the peace and stability of the South China Sea and promoted maritime cooperation, he added.

Xi: China, sultanate are trusted friends

As he arrived on state visit, the president expressed hopes of boosting the countries' already harmonious relationship

By XU WEI and AN BAIJIE

in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei

President Xi Jinping said on Nov 18 that he hoped his state visit to Brunei would bring the bilateral relations to a new level and deliver more benefits to the people of both countries.

Xi made the remark in a written statement on his arrival at Brunei International Airport in Bandar Seri Begawan.

China and Brunei are close neighbors facing each other across the sea, and they are also trusted friends and partners for each other, Xi said.

In the 27 years since the establishment of diplomatic relations, China and Brunei have treated each other as equals and have enjoyed a harmonious relationship in pursuit of

common development, Xi said.

In a signed article published in Bruneian newspapers on Nov 17, Xi said China will remain Brunei's sincere and good friend and a trusted partner for common development.

It is important that China and Brunei enhance mutual understanding, deepen friendship and strengthen cooperation to develop an even stronger relationship, Xi said.

"To take our relations to new heights, our two sides need to plan the development of China-Brunei relations from a long-term, strategic perspective, maintain high-level interactions and enhance political mutual trust," Xi said.

Xi made the visit at the invitation of Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah of Brunei after attending the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation leaders' informal

meeting and making a state visit to Papua New Guinea.

He noted that as China is working for the "two centenary goals" of national development and Brunei is pursuing Wawasan 2035, the countries are both at crucial stages of development.

"Remaining firmly committed to the policy of opening-up, China will promote substantive, results-oriented cooperation under the BRI (Belt and Road Initiative) and deliver greater benefits to the people in BRI partner countries," he said.

The two sides need to deepen practical cooperation and build stronger synergy between national development strategies, Xi said.

China will continue to assist Brunei in economic diversification, ensure the success of key coopera-

tion projects and explore with Brunei possible cooperation in energy, infrastructure, agriculture, fishery, e-commerce, maritime and other fields, he said, adding that China will encourage Chinese companies to invest in Brunei and will welcome more quality exports from Brunei.

Xi also called on the two countries to increase people-to-people and cultural exchanges.

"Our two sides need to expand cooperation and exchanges in culture, health, education, sports, tourism and human resources training. China supports the opening of more direct flights by our airlines and encourages more Chinese tourists to come here. In the same spirit, we also welcome more Bruneian friends to study, visit or work in China," he said.

The president also called for great-

er efforts to strengthen coordination and cooperation in regional and international affairs with Brunei.

China will work with Brunei to deepen cooperation between China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and accelerate negotiations for the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, so that the benefits of the upgraded China-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement can be delivered on the ground, Xi said.

"China will work with Brunei in safeguarding multilateralism, the international trading system, and the legitimate rights and interests of developing countries, to make our contribution to peace, stability and prosperity in the region," he said.

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