

PM Najib arrives in Beijing for six-day official visit to China

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Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak arrived in Beijing today for a six-day official visit to China aimed at strengthening long-standing bilateral ties between the two countries.

The plane carrying Najib and his wife, Rosmah Mansor, touched down at the Beijing Capital International Airport at 12.30pm (local time, the same time as in Malaysia).

Najib and Rosmah were received by Chinese Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs Liu Zhen Min and Malaysia's Ambassador to China Zainuddin Yahya and his wife Fairis Ishak.

The visit, which is at the invitation of Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang, is Najib's third official visit since 2009.

Najib's last visit to China was a working visit in March last year to attend the Boao Forum for Asia (BFA) in Hainan.

Najib is also accompanied by the Prime Minister's Special Envoy to China Ong Ka Ting and cabinet ministers including Foreign Minister Anifah Aman, Transport Minister Liow Tiong Lai and Plantation Industries and Commodities Minister Mah Siew Kiong.

Other ministers in the entourage are International Trade and Industry Minister Mustapa Mohamed, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Abdul Rahman Dahlan, Agriculture and Agro-based Industries Minister Ahmad Shabery Cheek, Education Minister Mahadzir Khalid and Tourism and Culture Minister Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz.

The accompanying state-level leaders comprise Sarawak Local Government Minister Prof Dr Sim Kui Hian, Johor Menteri Besar Mohamed Khaled Nordin, Terengganu Menteri Besar Ahmad Razif Abdul Rahman and Malacca Chief Minister Idris Haron.

On Thursday, Najib will call on Chinese President Xi Jinping. The meeting will be followed by a dinner hosted by Xi and his wife Peng Liyuan in honour Najib and Rosmah, at the Diaoyutai State Guest House.

Najib, who is also the finance minister, is scheduled to hold a bilateral meeting with Li on Tuesday after attending the official welcoming ceremony at the Great Hall of the People.

Najib and Li will witness the signing of more than 10 agreements and memorandums of understanding between the two governments in the areas of defence, economy, agriculture, education, finance and construction. This will be followed by Li hosting a dinner in honour of Najib.

Meanwhile, China's chairperson of the National People's Congress, Zhang Dejiang, will pay a courtesy call on Najib.

Najib will also meet key Chinese business leaders and witness more than 10 agreements between Malaysian and Chinese companies which, among others, pertain to investments in port construction, gas-pipe laying and water desalination plants, e-commerce, solar panel manufacturing, construction, investment, development and finance.

Keynote address

Najib will also deliver a keynote address at the Malaysia-China Business Forum Luncheon, expected to be attended by more than 400 businessmen from China and Malaysia.

On Friday, Najib will launch the Malaysia Tourism Pavilion on Alitrip, an e-commerce platform to facilitate tourists, especially those from China, to learn more about the tourist destinations in Malaysia.

Najib is also scheduled to visit the Gu'an New Industrial Park in Hebei Province and ride a high-speed train from Beijing to Tianjin, besides meeting Malaysians residing in China.

China has been Malaysia's largest trading partner since 2009, while Malaysia is China's eighth largest trading partner and the largest trading partner among the 10 Asean countries.

Data released by China shows that bilateral trade between Malaysia and China last year amounted to US\$97.3 billion (RM408.4 billion) and, as at August this year, the trade volume totalled US\$54.3 billion (RM227.9 billion).

- *Bernama*