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China prioritises Malaysia ties

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CLOSE FRIENDSHIP:
Leaders discuss stepping up trade, education, defence, financial services ties

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CHINA has pledged to accord its relations with Malaysia its highest priority to ensure the solid partnership between the two nations will flourish further, said Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

The prime minister said that during his bilateral meeting with China President Xi Jinping last night, the president described relations between Beijing and Putrajaya as the highest in four decades and expressed hope it would continue to bring good results.

"Xi also expressed his appreciation for my visits to China and meetings with him, as they signify not only strong formal ties between the two nations but also personal relations (between the two leaders)," he said after his meeting with Xi at Boao State Guest House here on the eve of the opening of the Boao Forum for Asia 2015.

Najib, who arrived in Boao yesterday, is scheduled to deliver a speech after Xi's keynote address today before leaving for Kuala Lumpur in the afternoon.

Last night's meeting, which was at Xi's personal invitation, was the fourth between the two leaders since Najib became the prime minister in 2009, and his fifth visit to China since 2011.

After the meeting, Xi hosted a dinner for Najib, who was accom-



Prime Minister **Datuk Seri Najib Razak** and China President **Xi Jinping** at the bilateral meeting on the eve of the Boao Forum for Asia 2015 in Boao, Hainan, yesterday. Bernama pic

panied by Special Envoy of the Prime Minister to China Tan Sri Ong Ka Ting, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Deputy Secretary-General for Bilateral Affairs Datuk Ramlan Ibrahim and Malaysia's Ambassador to China Datuk Zainuddin Yahya.

Najib said Xi hoped that the annual recorded trade growth averaging eight per cent would be expanded and increased.

He said the president also expressed his satisfaction at the good progress in the projects undertaken by China in the country, including the development of Xiamen University campus, Malaysia-Kuantan and Chengdu industrial parks.

"I also expressed my thanks to him for choosing Bank of China as a Renminbi clearing bank in Malaysia to boost stronger trade between the two nations," he said, adding that he was invited to launch the bank next month.

Najib said Xi also supported

Malaysia's decision to be one of the founding countries for the establishment of the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank, of which the Articles of Association is expected to be signed in June.

"We also discussed the need to increase the number of tourists from China to Malaysia. Due to the Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 tragedy and kidnapping cases in Sabah, the number dropped by nine per cent last year compared with 2013," he said.

He said among steps taken were to accord free Visas to tourists from China and to set up two consulates as Visa processing centres in two cities there.

"We also touched on other areas, including our cooperation in combating terrorism and in defence. We have agreed to undertake our first military exercise this year," Najib said, adding that he also thanked Xi for China's participa-

tion in the recently concluded Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace 2015 exhibition (LIMA) in Langkawi and aid worth US\$3.7 million (RM13.6 million) for the massive floods that hit the east-coast states recently.

He said China would also give its

fullest cooperation to Malaysia to ensure the success of its role as Asean chairman this year, adding that the country was also keen to bid for the proposed Kuala Lumpur-Singapore high-speed rail link project.

"Xi also congratulated me for my daughter's wedding. I was touched by his gesture of presenting gifts to her," he said.

Xi had presented Najib with a porcelain Chinese tea set and double-sided full moon and flower blossom embroidery, which symbolises eternal happiness.

"In his own words, Xi also told me to expect many more meetings between good friends," Najib said. Earlier, Najib landed at the coastal city of Haikou's Meilan International Airport about 4pm and was received by Zainuddin; Malaysia's Consul-General to Guangzhou Muzambli Markam; Malaysia's Trade Consul to Guangzhou Suresh Kumar, Hainan Vice-Governor Lu Chunhua and China's Ambassador to Malaysia Dr Huang Huikang.

The prime minister was also accorded a specially arranged 45-minute high-speed train ride from Meilan Airport Railway Station to Boao, the venue for the forum.

PM pays tribute to police

KUALA LUMPUR: The sacrifices of policemen must not be forgotten, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

In a radio broadcast, uploaded on najibrazak.com yesterday in conjunction with the 208th National Police Day, Najib thanked police personnel for their contributions and sacrifices.

"A policeman's job is a noble one, and requires tremendous sacrifice.

"Even though certain quarters sometimes question the police, we must never forget that the role of the police is fighting crime," he said, adding that they often had to face dangerous and armed gangsters, and terrorists.