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Long meeting reaffirms good ties

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FRIENDLY AND TRUSTED: Topics include trade, security and sea dispute



BEIJING

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's meeting with President Xi Jinping, one of the highlights of his ongoing official visit to China, capped off another eventful day of strengthening cooperation among friendly nations.

The day began with Najib and his delegation taking a China Railway high-speed train from here to Tianjin, located 138.6km away. The journey took 30 minutes only.

In Tianjin, Najib met with the municipality's leaders, and together, they witnessed the signing of a 15 billion yuan (RM8 billion) utility project involving a Malaysian company.

Xianda is investing in an integrated seawater desalination and salt-making project to produce one million tonnes of clarified water and 600,000 tonnes of desalinated water per day for the Nangang Industrial Zone.

After the signing ceremony, it was back on the high-speed train to the capital by lunchtime.

In the evening, the delegation headed for the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse, a historical hotel and guesthouse complex in the city used to house visiting foreign dignitaries, for the meeting with Xi and other government officials.

The welcoming and opening remarks were friendly and cordial, with Xi saying he was happy to see Najib again, and to send his regards

to the Yang di-Pertuan Agong.

The prime minister responded by thanking Xi for his gracious hospitality, and congratulated him for being appointed "core leader" by his party.

Behind closed doors, what should have been a 30-minute meeting stretched to an hour.

Later, at a press conference with Malaysian media, Najib was asked about the atmosphere of the meeting. Turning to his ministers, he asked for their response.

"You should ask my colleagues who are here... the foreign minister, (Tan Sri) Ong Ka Ting (special envoy to China)... What's your comment?"

"It's excellent. It supersedes the normal protocol. Very warm and very personal," said Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Anifah Aman.

"Very excellent. A lot of extra time given," Transport Minister Datuk

Seri Liow Tiong Lai added.

"It was extra time, injury time and even more time added," Najib said.

"His protocol officers reminded him (Xi) but he couldn't stop. He kept talking to our PM," Ong added.

Najib said because of those friendly ties, Malaysia and China agreed that their territorial claims in the South China Sea could be resolved peacefully.

"We agreed that these claims are between two friendly countries with a high level of trust. There is no reason why they can't be resolved.

"Of course, it might take some time. A nation's sovereignty is not an easy problem, but it should not jeopardise peace and stability in the South China Sea and the region."

Najib said both leaders also discussed military cooperation, especially in the fight against global terrorism.

"This is a problem currently faced by the world, and cooperation with China should be stepped up, including cooperation in managing the regional counter-terrorism centre."

On Malaysia's request that China import more of its palm oil, Najib said Xi had responded positively by saying that China would take steps to boost imports to levels last seen three years ago.

Najib said he had also spoken to Xi about his trip to Tianjin.

"Malaysian companies in China have so far invested US\$7.72 billion (RM32.3 billion), more than the amount Chinese companies have invested in Malaysia, which is US\$2.7 billion.

"However, with the announcements made during this visit — the MoUs and agreements — I believe the level of Chinese investments in Malaysia will see a sharp increase."

It was extra time, injury time and even more time added.

Datuk Seri Najib Razak in describing the time of his meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping