

Newspaper	NEW STRAITS TIMES
Date	6 NOVEMBER 2016

# PM excited about future potential

**CHINA VISIT:** Deals inked likely the biggest ever in a single visit by a leader of any country

NST-6/11/2016



**A** DAY before Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's arrival for his third official visit to China, the *China Daily* newspaper's weekend edition listed the trip at the top of its regular "Looking Ahead" column — a list of events and stories coming up in the next few days.

This visit, at the invitation of Premier Li Keqiang, was Najib's seventh to China, including previous working visits.

The cordial and friendly ties between Najib and China's top leaders — Li and President Xi Jinping — were quite evident.

At the official welcoming ceremony on Tuesday, held at the Great Hall of the People, Najib and Li chatted from the moment they shook hands and while walking on the red carpet, stopping only during the inspection of the guard and when the national

anthems of both countries were played. At one point, Li ushered Najib with a friendly hand on his back.

There were smiles all around.

The welcoming atmosphere must have spread to the Malaysian delegation as well, as some cabinet ministers were seen snapping pictures with their mobile phones during the ceremony.

Then, when Najib met Xi on Thursday at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse, what was supposed to be a 30-minute meeting went on for almost one hour more.

According to several ministers, Xi wanted to keep going despite reminders by his protocol officers.

The tangible results from the groundbreaking visit were already a matter of public record.

In total, 30 business-to-business and government-to-government deals were sealed, worth at least RM143 billion.

In all likelihood, this was the biggest value of agreements sealed during a single visit by the prime minister of any country.

But Najib and his delegation were equally excited about the potential that lies ahead.

International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mo-



Prime Minister **Datuk Seri Najib Razak** at a press conference with the Malaysian media in Beijing on Friday. Bernama pic

hamed, for example, was impressed by the work of China Fortune Land Development (CFLD) International at the Gu'an New Industrial City, one of more than 35 industry parks the company had built in China and elsewhere.

The plan is for CFLD to not only build similar new industry cities in Malaysia, but also bring in key investors to set up businesses with cutting-edge technology we have not yet seen.

CFLD founder Wang Wenxue has already met with Najib several times, including in Kuala Lumpur.

Transport Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai also reportedly admired the huge sorting centre of JD.com, operating non-stop and

providing delivery of packages to and from Tianjin, Hebei, Shandong, Shanxi and Inner Mongolia.

The logistics network in China is so efficient that online shopping portals like Alibaba can deliver within six hours. You could place an order tonight and have it delivered to your doorstep by the time you wake up next morning.

Speaking of Alibaba, the appointment of its founder and executive chairman Jack Ma as digital economy adviser to the Malaysian government was a major coup for Najib and Malaysia. The prime minister disclosed to the media later that two other major Chinese companies — Tencent and Wanda Group — had also met with him and expressed

interest to work with Malaysia.

One gets the impression that Malaysia's digital economy initiative, talked about for some time and given special mention in the recent 2017 Budget, is about to get a very big push once all the pieces fall into place — Jack Ma and Alibaba, Tencent, Wanda Group, CFLD, and Xiamen University's Malaysia campus, to name a few.

The key events to look out for next will be the launch of Malaysia's e-Free Trade Zone in March next year, for which Ma will be attending, and the official opening of the Xiamen University branch in Malaysia, to be graced by both Najib and Xi. Malaysia's close ties with China is a question of economic realities.

China is one of the biggest countries in the world.

More than 100 companies on the Fortune 500 list are in China.

It is not only the biggest economy in terms of trade and business, but is increasingly leading in innovation.

Malaysia is one of many countries in the world "tilting" to China because that is where the opportunities and prospects are.

China itself is actively reaching out to many economies.

In the same week that Najib was in China, Germany's Economy Minister was leading a delegation to Beijing; trade ministers from China, South Korea and Japan met in Japan on a trade deal, and Premier Li was in Latvia and Kazakhstan to establish links to China's One Belt, One Road initiative.