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PM to take ties to new level in third official visit

WEEK-LONG TRIP:

He will meet China's top leaders in govt, business

BEIJING

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's week-long official visit to China beginning today will be one of the most significant and important trips to the Asian economic powerhouse in recent years.

Leading a large delegation of ministers, government officials and corporate leaders, the prime minister is scheduled to meet China's top leaders in government and business.

His schedule includes meetings with China President Xi Jinping, Premier Li Keqiang, and Zhang Dejiang, chairman of the National People's Congress (NPC).

He will meet Alibaba founder Jack Ma and 30 captains of industry of China, as well as deliver a keynote address at the Malaysia-China Business Forum attended by about 400 businessmen.

Briefing Malaysian media here yesterday, Malaysian Ambassador to China Datuk Zainuddin Yahya said more than 20 agreements and memoranda of understanding (MoUs) will be signed during Najib's visit, his third official visit to China as prime minister.

The agreements cover both government-to-government cooperation as well as private sector investments in a wide range of sectors, including construction, finance, defence, education, port infrastructure and e-commerce.

"This visit proves that diplomatic ties between the two countries



Prime Minister **Datuk Seri Najib Razak's** visit to **China** today will also promote people-to-people ties. Bernama pic



are at a very good level.

"The exchange of visits, at the highest levels like these is very important in fostering understanding and uplifting bilateral ties and cooperation in many fields," Zainuddin said.

Najib's visit will include several trips outside Beijing, including to Gu'an New Industrial Park in Hebei Province, home to industries focused on new materials, e-commerce and high-tech electronics.

He will also travel via High Speed Rail from Beijing to Tianjin, a 30-

minute ride on a 117km line that will showcase China's technology and expertise in high-speed rail development.

China has indicated its interest to build the Kuala Lumpur-Singapore High Speed Rail project, estimated to cost RM70 billion, and one of the high-impact projects that would have massive multiplier effects on the economy and communities along the route.

Zainuddin said the official welcoming ceremony for Najib would be held at the Great Hall of the People tomorrow, followed by a bilateral meeting between both delegations.

"The meeting is expected to discuss bilateral cooperation in trade and investment, education, defence, agriculture, tourism and culture, science and technology and people-to-people contact," he

said, adding that a joint press statement would be issued after the meeting.

Diplomatic relations between the two countries started in 1974, marked by the historic journey to China by second prime minister Tun Abdul Razak Hussein, Najib's father.

In 2013, diplomatic ties were upgraded to "Comprehensive Strategic Cooperation", which expanded the scope from political, economic, investment and tourism to also include cooperation in social, science and technology, defence, security and education.

Zainuddin said Malaysia had also been identified as a strategic component of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road and One Belt One Road initiatives, China's long-term vision for greater connectivity and cooperation among Asian economies.

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