

**Momentous China Visit Awaits najib On 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Ties**  
**Bernama**  
**May 26, 2014**

PUTRAJAYA, May 26 (Bernama) -- A visit full of significant occasions befitting the 40th anniversary of Malaysia-China ties awaits Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak when he makes his six-day official trip to China from Tuesday.

For one, the Chinese government is willing to oblige a Malaysian request that the celebration marking the occasion be held on May 31, a public holiday in China, which happens to be the day Kuala Lumpur-Beijing ties were formalised in 1974.

The close relationship between the two nations would be further emphasised when Chinese President Xi Jinping sets aside normal protocol by hosting a private dinner for Najib.

"Usually Chinese presidents don't give a private dinner. Usually they just attend the bilateral meeting (with a visiting dignitary) and dinner is given by the prime minister.

"But this time around, he is not only receiving me but also accords a private dinner. That is very, very significant," Najib told senior editors here today ahead of the visit.

Najib is scheduled to meet Jinping on Friday in Beijing, after which they will attend the private dinner.

The decision by Najib's father, Malaysia's second prime minister Tun Abdul Razak Hussein to establish ties with Communist China in 1974 was seen as a bold move at that time, with Malaysia being the first Southeast Asian country to do so.

This has not gone unnoticed in Beijing, with Najib noting that Beijing-Kuala Lumpur ties were more than just government -to-government linkages as "a family kind of relationship" with the Tun Razak family had come into play.

Sharing his experience, Najib said former Chinese premier Wen Jiabao, during his visits to Malaysia, would insist that Najib's mother Tun Rahah Mohammad Noah attended some of the events lined up for him.

"This is very unusual because leaders (of other governments) would take relations more as a government-to-government level but China has taken it as a family kind of relationship," he said of the Malaysia-China relations.

Najib described his visit to the economic powerhouse as "momentous and historic in the present context".

He had visited China on numerous occasions, as Malaysia's defence minister, education minister, deputy prime minister and even as the prime minister.

Observers said Najib had further nurtured the strong bonds established by his late father with China across a wide spectrum of activities, from trade and investment to education, agriculture, defence and people-to-people ties.

The strategic cooperation was elevated to a comprehensive strategic partnership when Jinping visited Putrajaya last year.

A Malaysian government official said Najib would likely push the Kuala Lumpur-Beijing trade agenda, eyeing the volume to be more than US\$100 billion recorded last year.

A government official hinted that the trade volume with China could hit US\$160 billion annually as underlined in the five-year economic and trade cooperation programme between the two countries.

China has been Malaysia's largest trading partner since 2009 while Malaysia is China's eighth largest trading partner globally.

The official said Najib's visit was expected to change the flow of investment which saw Malaysia's cumulative foreign direct investment (FDI) into China at US\$6.3 billion as at 2012, while the investment cross-flow from China into Malaysia was merely a fraction of that.

"In the first half of 2013, FDI data showed that Malaysia received US\$72 million while Malaysia's investment in China was recorded at US\$318 million," said the official.

Malaysia, he said, wanted to attract a portion of the projected outbound Chinese investment of US\$500 billion over the next five years.

The possibility of establishing a clearing bank may also feature on Najib's agenda, as part of the trade between the two countries was conducted using their respective currencies, the official said.

The official said the China visit may also provide an opportunity for Najib to woo back Chinese tourists following a drop in the number of Chinese visitors to Malaysia after the disappearance of a Malaysian jetliner on March 8 with a large number of China nationals aboard.

The development of the China-Malaysia Qinzhou Industrial Park and Malaysia-China Kuantan Industrial Park may also be on the table during the visit.

Another significant agenda that may be touched on is the possible establishment of a Malaysian consulate-general office in Nanning and Chinese consulate-general offices in Kota Kinabalu and Penang, said the official.

Among issues expected to be brought up in Beijing are maritime security in the South China Sea, the Asean-China Free Trade Agreement and the construction of a Chinese mosque in Kuala Lumpur, he added.

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