

Najib Arrives in China for 40th Anniversary of Diplomatic Ties

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By Niam Seet Wei

XI'AN (China), May 27 (Bernama) -- Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak arrived here Tuesday for a six-day official visit to China to commemorate the 40th anniversary of diplomatic ties between Malaysia and China.

Najib, who was accompanied by his wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor on the visit, arrived at the Xi'an Xianyang International Airport at about 5:25 pm.

They were received on arrival by the Malaysian Ambassador to China, Datuk Iskandar Sarudin and his wife Datin Rahmah Mohd Lajis, Vice-Governor of Shaanxi province Wang Lixia, Deputy General-Secretary of Shaanxi Province Zhang Xiaoning, Director-general of Shaanxi Foreign Affairs office Zhang Baowen and Chinese Ambassador to Malaysia Huang Huikang.

His trip to China is at the invitation of his counterpart Li Keqiang.

Other members of the Malaysian delegation were International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed, Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob and the Prime Minister's Special Envoy to China, Tan Sri Ong Ka Ting.

Najib and his entourage were scheduled to visit Xi'an and Beijing from May 27 to June 1 to mark the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between Malaysia and China.

Upon arrival at the hotel, Najib and Rosmah received a courtesy call from the Governor of Shaanxi province, Lou Qinjian. Later, Najib and his entourage were scheduled to attend a welcoming dinner hosted by Lou at the hotel.

Tomorrow, Najib, who is also Finance Minister, is scheduled to officiate the "Malaysia-Xi'an Halal Food Festival Week" at Beiyuanmen Street (Muslim Street) and tour the Malaysian booths.

Before heading to the Museum of Qin Terracotta Warriors and Horses, the prime minister and his wife will visit the 1,200-year-old Great Mosque of Xi'an tomorrow.

They will then depart for Beijing and meet top Chinese leaders there on the same day.

While in Beijing, Najib is scheduled to attend bilateral meetings with Chinese top leaders, witness the signing ceremony of inter-governmental memoranda of understanding

involving bilateral trade and political cooperation, visit the Beijing Foreign Studies University and perform Friday prayers at the Niujie Mosque.

He is also scheduled to attend an economic summit with Chinese entrepreneurs in Beijing as well.

Malaysia and China established diplomatic relations on May 31, 1974 when the late Tun Abdul Razak Hussein, who was also Najib's father, was the Malaysian prime minister.

Malaysia was the first among Asean countries which initiated diplomatic ties with the world's second largest economy.

China has been Malaysia's largest trading partner since 2009, while Malaysia continued to be China's top trading partner in Asean since 2008.

Last year, bilateral trade between the two nations amounted to RM202.23 billion, up 12.5 per cent year-on-year.

Both Malaysia and China had agreed to boost the two-way trade to US\$160 billion by 2017.

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