

M'sia, China to Sign More Than 10 Agreements, MoUs - Envoy

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From Hafizah Kamaruddin

BEIJING, Oct 30 (Bernama) -- Malaysia-China bilateral relations will be further strengthened when Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak commences his six-day official visit to China tomorrow.

Malaysian ambassador to China, Datuk Zainuddin Yahya said this third official visit by Najib to China was important and significant, apart from enhancing the continuous cordial relations between the prime minister and China's top leaders.

Najib's first official visit to China was in 2009 and the second visit was in 2014 in conjunction with the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Malaysia and China.

The prime minister's latest visit to China was a working visit in March last year to attend the Boao Forum for Asia (BFA) in Hainan, Zainuddin told the Malaysian media, here, on Sunday.

"The continuous exchange of visits at the highest level such as this is important to foster understanding and strengthen relations as well as bilateral cooperation in various fields," he said.

He said Najib who would be accompanied by his wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, the Prime Minister's Special Envoy to China Tan Sri Ong Ka Ting, and several cabinet ministers including Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Anifah Aman, Transport Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai, Plantation Industries and Commodities Minister Datuk Seri Mah Siew Kiong.

Other ministers in the entourage will be International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Abdul Rahman Dahlan, Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Minister Datuk Seri Shabery Cheek, Education Minister Datuk Seri Mahadzir Khalid and Tourism and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Nazri Abdul Aziz.

The accompanying state level-leaders comprise Sarawak Local Government Minister Prof Dr Sim Kui Hian, Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin, Terengganu Menteri Besar Ahmad Razif Abdul Rahman and Melaka Chief Minister Datuk Seri Idris Haron.

Najib who has a packed programme, will witness the signing of more than 10 agreements and memorandums of understanding (MoUs) between the two governments on defence, economy, agriculture, education, finance and construction.

Meanwhile, companies of Malaysia and China will also sign more than 10 agreements including investments in port construction, gas pipe laying and water desalination plants, e-commerce, solar panel manufacturing, construction, investment, development and finance.

Zainuddin said data released by China showed that bilateral trade between Malaysia and China last year amounted to USD97.3 billion (RM408.4 billion) and as at August this year, the trade volume

totalled USD54.3 billion (RM227.9 billion).

He said Najib and his delegation that would be arriving at Beijing Capital International Airport at noon tomorrow would be received by China's Deputy Foreign Minister Liu Zhenming.

"The official welcoming ceremony for the prime minister will be held at the Great Hall of the People on Tuesday, followed by a meeting with his counterpart, Premier Li Keqiang before both of them attend a bilateral meeting.

"Among the topics of discussion at the meeting relate to bilateral trade and investments, education, defence, agriculture, tourism and culture, science and technology, and people-to-people contact," he said.

In the evening, Najib will attend an official dinner hosted by Li at the Great Hall of the People in honour of the prime minister's visit to China.

Before that, China's chairman of the National People's Congress, Zhang Dejiang will pay a courtesy call on Najib.

On Thursday, Najib will attend a dinner with Chinese President Xi Jinping at the Diaoyutai State Guest House after a four-eye meeting with Xi.

Najib will also attend various programmes in conjunction with his visit including a roundtable conference with more than 30 captains of industry of China as well as a meeting with Alibaba Group chairman Jack Ma.

Apart from that, Najib will be delivering a keynote address at the Malaysia-China Business Forum Luncheon which will be attended by more than 400 businessmen from China and Malaysia.

The prime minister will also be launching the Malaysia Tourism Pavilion on Alitrip, which is an e-commerce platform to facilitate tourists, especially those from China, learning more about the tourist destinations in Malaysia.

Zainuddin said last year, 1.6 million tourists from China visited Malaysia and as at September this year, 1.4 million visas had been issued by the Malaysian Immigration office in China to Chinese citizens compared to 926,609 visas for the same period last year.

In this regard, he is confident of meeting the country's target of attracting two million tourists from China to Malaysia.

Zainuddin said Najib would also be visiting areas outside of Beijing including the Gu'an New Industrial Park in Hebei Province and would ride a high-speed train from Beijing to Tianjin, a distance of over 100 km in 30 minutes.

The prime minister will also be meeting 500 members of the Malaysian community and students in China at a dinner in Beijing on Friday.

Currently, there are 814 Malaysian students registered with the Malaysia Education office including 403 students sponsored by the Malaysian Education Ministry to learn Mandarin at Beijing Foreign Studies University (BFSU) and Beijing Language and Cultural University (BLCU), as well as 29 students sponsored by MARA and 25 sponsored by Sime Darby.

On diplomatic relations with China, Zainuddin said a Malaysian Consulate- General office had been opened in Xian in Shaanxi Province recently, which was the sixth consulate office in China.

Malaysia now has consulate offices in Hong Kong (opened in 1971), Guangzhou (1994), Shanghai (1999), Kunming (2004) and Nanning (2015).

Last year, the Chinese government opened two consulate offices in Malaysia, namely in Kota Kinabalu and Penang.

"The establishment of consulate-general offices symbolises the closeness and importance placed by the two countries to continue strengthening their bilateral relations," said Zainuddin.

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