

Mahathir's China visit to set new strategic pillars

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PUTRAJAYA, Aug 16 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's five-day official visit to China will serve as a new milestone in the consolidation of bilateral ties between the two countries, the Foreign Ministry said today.

Wisma Putra said in a statement that it would set new strategic pillars to invigorate the future cooperation between the two countries, especially in the political, trade, investment, agriculture, technology and regional security realms.

"Malaysia and China continue to maintain their close and comprehensive bilateral relations," it said.

Wisma Putra said the official visit, which is from tomorrow to Aug 21, is at the invitation of China's Premier Li Keqiang.

Dr Mahathir will be accompanied by his wife, Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali.

Also accompanying the Prime Minister are Foreign Minister Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah; Primary Industries Minister Teresa Kok Suh Sim; International Trade and Industry Minister Ignatius Darell Leiking; Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry Minister Datuk Salahuddin Ayub; Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Law) Datuk Liew Vui Keong; Entrepreneurship Development Minister Mohd Redzuan Md Yusof and Perak Menteri Besar Ahmad Faizal Azumu.

Wisma Putra said this was the maiden visit by Dr Mahathir to China after assuming office as the seventh prime minister of Malaysia in May this year.

It said Dr Mahathir visited China seven times when he was the fourth prime minister of Malaysia between 1981 and 2003.

Wisma Putra said Dr Mahathir would visit Hangzhou where he is scheduled to meet provincial leaders and visit the Alibaba Group corporate headquarters and Zhejiang Geely Holding Group.

In Beijing, the Prime Minister will meet Premier Li Keqiang and President Xi Jinping to discuss bilateral issues as well as regional and international issues of mutual interest.

Wisma Putra said Dr Mahathir and Li would witness the signing of three memoranda of understanding (MoU) to mark the strengthening of the Kuala Lumpur-Beijing strategic partnership.

"The MoUs are in the areas of agriculture and agri-commodity," it said.

Wisma Putra said that in Beijing, the Prime Minister was also scheduled to hold a dialogue with renowned entrepreneurs as well as potential investors from China as well as host a dinner for the Malaysian diaspora.

China has been Malaysia's top trading partner for the past nine consecutive years.

In 2017, the total bilateral trade between the two countries stood at RM290.65 billion (US\$67.72 billion), said Wisma Putra.

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