

## **Mahathir to open new chapter in Malaysia-China ties**

**BERNAMA**

**17/08/2018**

**From Jamaluddin Muhammad**

HANGZHOU, Aug 17 (Bernama) – Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad will fly into this city later Friday to begin a five-day official visit to China to open a new chapter to further enhance Kuala Lumpur-Beijing ties.

Malaysian Ambassador to China Datuk Zainuddin Yahya said Chinese leaders were excited to welcome the Malaysian prime minister.

This is said to be despite the strong statements coming out of Kuala Lumpur lately, particularly on the suspension of two China-backed projects – the East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) and Trans-Sabah Gas Pipeline (TSGP).

“They are waiting and excited to receive Tun Dr Mahathir ... so far no official response from China on the matter,” he told Malaysian journalists here Friday.

The two projects, especially the RM81-billion ECRL, had gained attention as the Malaysian government felt that the mega projects of the previous government, among others, burdened the country and its people with mega debts and there have been hints that Kuala Lumpur may scrap the project.

“We should be looking at potentials, not only issues,” said Zainuddin.

He said vast potentials waited to be explored in Kuala Lumpur-Beijing relations as China was the world’s second-largest economy after the United States, with advancement in science and technology and innovations.

“We should seize the opportunities during the visit to tap high quality investment as the country (Malaysia) moves towards developed-nation status,” he said.

Zainuddin said Malaysia also hoped to export the whole durian to China, which would benefit Malaysian farmers.

China has been Malaysia’s largest trading partner for nine consecutive years, with total trade of US\$96.5 billion (about RM386 billion) last year, an increase of nine per cent compared to 2016.

The total trade between the two countries between January and July this year was US\$61 billion (RM244 billion), up 17 per cent compared to the same corresponding period last year.

Zainuddin said Dr Mahathir was scheduled to meet President Xi Jinping, Prime Minister Li Keqiang, Chinese investors and the business community and the Malaysian diaspora.

He was also scheduled to visit the Alibaba Group headquarters, Zhejiang Geely Holding Group headquarters, National Agricultural Science and Technology Innovation Park and Da Jiang Innovations which produce drones, among others.

The Alibaba and Geely engagements are in this city while the other events are in Beijing.

Dr Mahathir is also scheduled to witness the signing of memorandums of understanding related to bilateral currency swap arrangement, the protocol for export of frozen durian, development and promotion of Malaysian palm oil biofuel, collaboration in rubberised bitumen road technology as well as accounting and audit regulatory cooperation.

Dr Mahathir will be accompanied by his wife, Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, and six ministers – Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah (Foreign), Teresa Kok (Primary Industries), Darell

Leiking (International Trade and Industry), Datuk Salahuddin Ayub (Agriculture and Agro-based Industry), Datuk Liew Vui Keong (Prime Minister's Department) and Mohd Redzuan Md Yusof (Entrepreneurship Development).

-- BERNAMA

© 2018 BERNAMA. All Rights Reserved. [Disclaimer](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Security Policy](#)

Source: <http://www.bernama.com/en/news.php?id=1633488>