

PM arrives in Beijing for Belt and Road Forum

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From Mohd Haikal Mohd Isa

BEIJING, April 24 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad arrived at Beijing Capital International Airport here today for a five-day working visit to China and attend the 2nd Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation (BRF).

The special aircraft carrying him and his wife Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali landed at the airport at 8 pm (time is same in Malaysia and China) .

The 94-year-old prime minister was met on arrival by Foreign Minister Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah, high-ranking Chinese officials and Malaysian embassy charge d' affaires in China, Nuryante Mohd Yazid.

He also inspected a guard-of-honour mounted by the country's armed forces.

This is Dr Mahathir's second visit to China since leading the Pakatan Harapan (PH) coalition of political parties to victory in Malaysia's 14th General Election in May last year.

The Prime Minister visited China in August last year. During his first stint as Malaysia's premier from 1983 until 2003, he had visited the country seven times.

Besides attending the forum on the Belt and Road initiative along with 36 world leaders and hundreds of representatives, Dr Mahathir will also hold discussions with his Chinese counterpart Li Keqiang and also President Xi Jinping, where issues of mutual interest are expected to dominate the agenda.



Dr Mahathir and Keqiang will also witness the signing of several memoranda of understanding (MoUs) on enhancing palm oil trade between the two countries and on the RM44 billion East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) project in Peninsular Malaysia.

China has been Malaysia's largest trade partner for the past 10 years with total trade last year jumping eight per cent to stand at RM313 billion.

Known as a leader with a deep affinity for the latest technology, the Prime Minister will also spend some time visiting China's leading telecommunications company, Huawei Technologies and take a closer look at their cutting-edge technologies.

He will also visit Sensetime Ltd, a global leader of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology and hold a dialogue session with China's captains of industry as well as the private sector to try to entice them into investing in Malaysia.

The Prime Minister will leave for home on Sunday.

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