

Malaysia rolls out red carpet to welcome PM Tarique

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Online Desk : A red carpet was rolled out as Prime Minister Tarique Rahman arrived in Kuala Lumpur on Sunday night, June 21, on his maiden overseas visit after assuming office, at the invitation of his Malaysian counterpart Anwar Ibrahim. A special Biman Bangladesh Airlines flight carrying the Prime Minister, his wife Dr Zubaida Rahman and the accompanying delegation landed at Kuala Lumpur International Airport at 8:45 pm local time (6:45 pm Bangladesh time).

At the exclusive VVIP terminal Bunga Raya Complex, the Prime Minister was received by Malaysia's Religious Affairs Minister Zulkifli Hasan and his wife. A little girl presented a bouquet to Zubaida Rahman at that time. Bangladesh High Commissioner to Malaysia Manjurul Karim Khan Chowdhury and Deputy High Commissioner Mosammat Shahanara Monica were also present.

A red-carpet reception and a static guard of honour were accorded to the Prime Minister at the airport. A ceremonial motorcade with a 50-minute ride on the road is taking him to Shangri-La Hotel in Kuala Lumpur, where he will stay during the visit. Both sides of the road leading to the place of his residence were decorated with the flags of two friendly countries – Bangladesh and Malaysia – to welcome the Bangladesh Prime Minister.

Earlier, the Biman flight departed from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka at 2:45 pm Bangladesh time. The visit marks Tarique Rahman's first foreign trip after assuming office on February 17 following his party's landslide victory in the 13th parliamentary election. Officials said the Prime Minister chose Malaysia as the destination for his first official foreign visit, aiming to strengthen economic ties, expand labour market opportunities and deepen strategic cooperation during the two-day tour.

The Prime Minister is leading a 23-member high-level delegation that includes Foreign Minister Dr Khalilur Rahman, Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Ariful Haque Choudhury, State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Aninda Islam Amit, Prime Minister's Adviser on Foreign Affairs Humaiun Kobir, Adviser on Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Mahdi Amin and Adviser on Defence AKM Shamsul Islam.

The delegation also includes Prime Minister's Principal Secretary ABM Abdus Sattar, Foreign Secretary Asad Alam Siam and his Additional Press Secretary Atikur Rahman Rumon. Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim extended the invitation to Tarique Rahman shortly after the formation of the new government, leading to the official visit.

Malaysia is one of Bangladesh's major trading partners in Asia, although the trade balance remains heavily in Malaysia's favour. Bangladesh imports around US\$2 billion worth of goods from Malaysia annually, while exports to the Southeast Asian nation stand at about US\$135 million. Bangladesh mainly exports ready-made garments, particularly knitwear products, to Malaysia, while importing fuel and edible oil.

On Monday morning, the Prime Minister will be accorded an official reception upon his arrival at the Malaysian Prime Minister's Office, Perdana Putra, in Putrajaya. He is scheduled to hold his first one-on-one meeting with his Malaysian counterpart there. The meeting will be followed by bilateral talks between high-level delegations, led by the two leaders.

The discussions are expected to focus on expanding cooperation in trade and investment, energy, halal economy, manpower recruitment, semiconductor industry, agriculture, education and people-to-people

connectivity. Bangladesh will also request Malaysia to recruit more Bangladeshi workers in various sectors and discuss measures to ensure the welfare of Bangladeshi expatriates living in the country.

During the visit, Bangladesh is expected to seek Malaysia's support for becoming a Sectoral Dialogue Partner of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and joining the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), the world's largest free trade bloc.

Officials said memorandums of understanding on tourism and cultural cooperation may also be signed during the visit. The Prime Ministers of the two countries will be present at the signing ceremony of the bilateral cooperation documents. They will hold a joint press conference, and the Prime Minister of Malaysia will host a luncheon in honour of his Bangladeshi counterpart. After concluding his visit to Malaysia, Prime Minister Tarique Rahman will depart from Kuala Lumpur for Dalian, China, on Monday afternoon on a four-day official visit to China.

Source: UNB