

## More Milestones Achieved Along The Path Of Belt And Road

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BEIJING: Malaysia's participation in China's Belt and Road initiative has yielded many concrete results after moving past the discussion stage, Transport Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai says.

Transport infrastructure, ports, civil aviation, logistics and railway were among the fields that saw positive bilateral cooperation, he added.

"The port alliance between Malaysia and China will meet in Kuala Lumpur at the end of this year to discuss our cooperation mechanism and how to strengthen our alliance. "This alliance includes port authorities, port operators and vessel owners. It is a good cooperation model," Liow said.

Liow, who is also the MCA president, is in the Chinese capital as part of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak's delegation to the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation.

The port alliance was forged in November 2015 between six Malaysian and 10 Chinese ports. Liow said that Malaysia would add two more ports in East Malaysia to the alliance mentioned, but did not name the ports.

He was speaking to the Malaysian media after an hour-long meeting with his counterpart Li Xiaopeng at China's Transport Ministry here yesterday.

Along with him were ministry officials, AirAsia group chief executive officer Tan Sri Tony Fernandes and team, representatives from the Malacca Gateway project and Kuala Linggi International Port, as well as MCA central committee members.

"I am bringing along these companies to show to the Chinese minister the many results of our bilateral cooperation. The minister was pleased," he said.

On civil aviation, Liow said they discussed the fifth freedom, referring to the rights for an airline to fly between two foreign countries. "We have requested for our cargo flights to fly from Zhengzhou (in China) to India, and we hope they will grant us the permission," he said.

AirAsia, which currently flies into 21 Chinese cities on 51 routes, has also requested to fly into more second tier cities, he added.

Liow said he raised the importance of having bilateral maritime search and rescue cooperation to exchange information and enhance communication, following the boat mishap in Sabah that caused the death of four tourists from China.

On the missing Malaysia Airlines jetliner MH370, Liow said the Malaysian Government and the airline met the Chinese next-of-kin on April 19 in Beijing.

He said enhancing communication with the Chinese families was a promise made by Malaysia, and he hoped the Chinese side could help to facilitate this.

A small group of the Chinese families gathered in front of the Malaysian Embassy here yesterday. One of their requests was to meet Najib.

Liow also met Civil Aviation Administration of China administrator Feng Zhenglin and Communist Party of China central committee international department head Song Tao.

He witnessed the signing of a memorandum of understanding between Smart Crest, Fajarbaru and China Railway Engineering Corporation on the construction of the Asia Petroleum Hub (APH) oil terminal in Johor.

The RM1.4bil APH project, launched in 2007, was stalled after running into financial difficulties in 2010. But recently, there were reports on the revival of the project.

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