

## **Japan gives Malaysia two patrol boats**

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**Reuters**

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said today that Tokyo will give Malaysia two patrol boats, a move that visiting Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak welcomed as an aid to promoting stability in the South China Sea.

Najib arrived in Japan yesterday on a visit that comes just weeks after he was in China on a six-day visit in which he agreed to buy four Chinese patrol boats in his nation's first significant defence deal with China.

"Today's agreement - Japan is willing to hand over two decommissioned patrol vessels to our maritime enforcement agency - shows the nature of our relationship is now broad-based," Najib said.

Malaysia, along with three other members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (Asean) - the Philippines, Vietnam and Brunei - are among the countries contesting territorial claims with China over the South China Sea. China claims nearly the entire body of water as its territory.

Najib said talks with Abe touched on this issue, adding: "Malaysia continues to play its part to ensure the South China Sea will be an area of peace and stability, without which we cannot achieve prosperity."

Discussions also included the planned high-speed rail link between Singapore and the Malaysian capital of Kuala Lumpur, set to be built by 2026 and with the two neighbours set to finalise a bilateral agreement in December.

Japan has expressed interest in the project, and Najib said he had assured Abe that the bidding process would be conducted in a fair and transparent way.

- Reuters

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