

Najib in Delhi for high-level talks
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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak arrived in New Delhi today to begin his five-day official visit to India, where high-level talks are planned to harness strategic partnerships with Asia's third largest economy.

Leading a large delegation to India, his first since taking office as prime minister in April last year, Najib is scheduled to meet Indian Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh - where both leaders are expected to touch on a broad range of topics from trade to security.

On a chill winter evening, India rolled out the red carpet for Najib - to accord a warm welcome to the Malaysian delegation - signifying the importance of Malaysia as an "old friend" in the region.

The private jet carrying Najib and his wife Rosmah Mansor, plus other entourage members, landed at the Palam Air Force Station at about 7pm (Indian time).

On hand to welcome the Malaysian delegation were various Indian dignitaries, including Minister of State for Railway E Ahmed and India's High Commissioner-designate to Malaysia, Vijay Gokhale.

Tomorrow, in the morning Najib will visit the 'Rajghat' (Mahatma Gandhi memorial) for the wreath laying ceremony followed by a meeting with India's External Affairs Minister SM Krishna.

He will later call on India's president Pratibha Patil at the Rashtrapati Bhavan (Presidential Palace) in the Indian capital.

The main events in New Delhi will be his keynote address at the Malaysia-India Business Forum, jointly organised by the Associated Chamber of Commerce, Confederation of Indian Industry and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

Ministers and MBs in Najib's entourage

Najib will also call on India's vice-president Hamid Ansari and later meet Congress party leader Sonia Gandhi.

The climax of his visit in New Delhi will be a meeting with his counterpart Dr Manmohan Singh at Hyderabad House, where the Indian government will host a banquet for Najib, who is on a state visit.

He is also slated to meet Sonia's son Rahul Gandhi, who is also a member of parliament and general secretary of the Congress party, before departing for Chennai in the afternoon of Jan 21.

Senior delegation members, among others, include Foreign Minister Anifah Aman, International Trade and Industry Minister Mustapa Mohamed, Tourism Minister Ng Yen Yen and Human Resources Minister Dr S Subramaniam.

Also in the entourage are BN Perak Menteri Besar Zambry Abd Kadir, Pahang MB Adnan Yaakob, Johor MB Abdul Ghani Othman, Negeri Sembilan MB Mohamad Hasan and Malacca Chief Minister Mohd Ali Rustam.

Najib arrived from Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, after concluding his official trip to the emirate.

- *Bernama*

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