

**People of Chennai describe Najib as 'new hero'**  
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Many people might be wondering what is that attracted Mohd Najib Razak to make a historical two-day visit beginning yesterday to Chennai, which makes him the first Malaysian prime minister to make an official visit to the capital of Tamil Nadu state in India.

In fact the people here were deeply touched by his gesture as all the people met by this reporter in Chennai described Najib's visit as very symbolic because Malaysia and Chennai had longstanding ties.

They described Najib as Malaysia's "new hero" and said they were also eagerly awaiting the historic meeting between Najib and the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, M Karunanidhi.

Business leaders from around Tamil Nadu and also Malaysia had already camped here since two days ago in anticipation of the visit.

Hotels around this city had been fully booked till the end of this week because of the huge number of people who have been here for the visit, including people from Singapore as well.

It is understood many businessmen had to put up with friends because rooms at five star hotels had all been taken up.

Malaysia's Deputy Foreign Minister A Kohilan Pillay, who is also in Chennai, related to Bernama as to how Najib arrived at the decision to make a two-day visit to Chennai.

"Initially it was to be only a three or four-hour visit but I managed to impress on the prime minister the importance needed to be given to Chennai because of the longstanding and special ties between Malaysia and Chennai.

"Not only in terms of family ties but also in terms of business, investment and others.

"In the end the visit was extended to two days and the prime minister will also be meeting Malaysian students in Chennai," he said.

Najib and Karunanidhi are expected to discuss issues like entry of foreign workers into Malaysia from Tamil Nadu, work permits, visa problems and also on politics.

- *Bernama*

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