

Najib to make historic visit to Batu Caves
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Prime Minister Najib Razak will make an historic visit to Batu Caves on the eve of Thaipusam, which falls on Saturday.

A spokesman of the prime minister's office confirmed that Najib would be at the Batu Caves temple, where more than one million Hindus would converge for Thaipusam, on Friday night.

The visit will make Najib only the second prime minister in the country's history to visit the Hindu holy site since the nation gained independence more than 50 years ago.

Najib's father Abdul Razak Hussein was the first premier to grace the occasion during his tenure as the nation's second prime minister more than 30 years ago.

However, it is unclear if Najib will deliver a speech at the event.

Since taking over as prime minister nearly a year ago, Najib had made it a point to win the hearts and the minds of the 1.8 Malaysian Indian population, many of whom are believed to have switched allegiance in the 2008 general election backing the ruling coalition since the nation's independence.

The Thaipusam festival commemorates the birthday of Lord Murugan, the youngest son of Lord Shiva and his wife Parvati, and the occasion when Parvati gave Lord Murugan a vel (spear) so that he could vanquish the evil demon Soorapadman.

Najib's visit to Batu Caves also comes on the heels of the prime minister's visit to Tamil Nadu, the heartland of Malaysian Tamils, about a week ago.

The Tamil Nadu visit also ensured that Najib's name was inked in the history books as being the first Malaysian prime minister to visit the Indian state.

Tamils form 80 percent of the Indian Malaysian population.

- *Bernama*

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