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## Najib's visit to Britain expected to strengthen relations

BRITAIN'S long-standing relationship with Malaysia will be further "resuscitated" when Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak begins his four-day official visit here today. The present British coalition government headed by David Cameron feels that this stopover is vital because both sides have a lot of like-mindedness, besides their common history.

According to British High Commissioner to Malaysia Simon Featherstone, Britons have been accused of neglecting their relationship with Malaysia in recent years. And Cameron wants to correct this perception as well as renew ties, in particular Britain's position as Malaysia's choice partner in a wide range of areas.

Britain views Najib's visit with his delegation, which includes five min-



isters, as a milestone in reinvigorating the cooperation between both countries in trade, defence, education, diplomacy, politics, sports and bilateral relationship.

Despite being a small trading nation, Malaysia's trade with Britain is RM20bil and it is seeking more European countries to buy its products.

Najib, arriving from Turkmenistan, is visiting Britain at a most appropriate time especially now that the proposed visa travel for Malaysians

has been removed. Last year, there were reports that Britain may revisit its proposal to impose the visa requirements on Malaysians if the issue of overstaying was not handled properly.

As of January 2010, there were some 20,000 Malaysian overstayers in Britain.

Najib will kick off his tour by witnessing the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) tomorrow between both countries on curbing cross-border crimes.

Home Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein will sign on behalf of the Malaysian government while Home Secretary Theresa May will do the same for Britain.

The MoU covers, among others, organised crime, human trafficking and migrant smuggling, falsification

of documents, cybercrime and money-laundering.

They will look into establishing technical cooperation and sharing of intelligence and expertise, among others.

Najib will also witness a transport-related MoU when he visits St Pancras station after which he will hold discussions with Secretary of State for Transport Philip Hammond and British rail companies. This is in preparation for Malaysia's constructing of its multi billion ringgit My Rapid Transit (MRT) in November.

On its part, Britain is seeking to win business for its firms over the MRT project, which is expected to be similar to the St Pancras rail network that provides direct passenger inter-connection with Eurostar's high-speed services to Paris, Brussels

and Lille.

Following this, Najib will be given a red carpet welcome and inspect a guard of honour before having a luncheon meeting with Cameron at 10 Downing Street.

One of the key issues that is expected to dominate their discussion is Najib's call on the need for members and leaders of the world's major faiths to censure and reject their own extremists and jointly support a "movement of moderates."

Najib and wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor will have an audience with Queen Elizabeth II at Buckingham Palace on Thursday.

Najib will also meet Muslim leaders and conclude his visit by meeting the Malaysian community in Britain.