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PRIME NEWS

Malaysia, S'pore ties set to soar with projects

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JOINT-VENTURE BOOSTS: State investment arms of both countries involved in projects worth multi-billion ringgit

SINGAPORE

DATUK Seri Najib Razak arrived in the island republic yesterday to begin a visit that will mark the beginning of a new era in bilateral relations between Malaysia and Singapore.

For the first time, the state investment arms of both countries — Khazanah Nasional Bhd and Singapore's Temasek Holdings Ltd — will be involved in mega joint venture projects worth multi-billion ringgit in gross development value (GDV), bringing bilateral economic cooperation to greater heights.

The buzz is especially apparent in Johor, where another feather will be added to the Iskandar Malaysia cap, to the tune of RM11 billion in GDV.

The prime minister and his Singaporean counterpart, Lee Hsien Loong, will launch the 2ha "urban wellness" project in Medini North with a groundbreaking ceremony today.

They will also unveil the name and logo for the project, which involves a five-storey building housing a spa, a training centre, gymnasium, shops and the like.

Khazanah and Temasek are also involved in the "resort wellness" project in Medini Central with an estimated GDV of RM3 billion.

The project, covering more than 80ha, will see houses, condominiums, apartments and shops being built.

Also in Johor, Iskandar Waterfront Holdings Sdn Bhd and two Singapore government-linked companies will jointly develop 28ha strategically located at Danga Bay with a GDV of RM8 billion.

Earlier in the day, the two prime ministers will unveil the model of a project by M+S Pte Ltd, a 60:40 joint venture between Khazanah and Temasek to develop projects in Marina South and Ophir-Rochor in Singapore.

The progress of the three Khazanah-Temasek projects are the fo-



Prime Minister **Datuk Seri Najib Razak** and his wife, **Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor**, with Singapore Prime Minister **Lee Hsien Loong** and his wife, **Ho Ching**, tossing 'yee sang' at the Fullerton Bay Hotel in Singapore yesterday. Pic by Hasan Ismail

cus of the 4th Malaysia-Singapore Leaders' Retreat this time around.

Also on the agenda is the discussion of the recently concluded technical study regarding a Rapid Transit System (RTS) rail link that will connect Johor Baru and Singapore.

Foreign Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Anifah Aman, who spoke to reporters prior to the start of the retreat yesterday, said a Joint Engineering Study (JES) by both countries on the RTS had been commissioned and completed in November.

Both governments have given 12 months since that time to decide whether they would want to move into phase two of the study.

The first phase of this study involved the identification of alignment and station scheme options with a detailed assessment for the overall transport system.

A rapid transport system by rail is seen as a boon for those residing on both sides of the Causeway, as commuters who travel daily between the two cities number in the

hundreds of thousands.

"Both governments have up to 12 months to decide on the preferred options before JES Phase 2 can commence," said Anifah.

The idea for an RTS between the two cities has been floating around for some time and if it is set up, would be linked up with Singapore's mass rapid transit system.

The RTS is among three projects outlined under the implementation of the Points of Agreement (POA) on the former KTM Berhad land in Singapore.

With 10 ministers and Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman as part of Najib's working visit, Anifah said many other discussions were expected to be held in the 1½-day retreat.

The Malaysian delegation will discuss further on initiatives that were outlined during the last retreat in Putrajaya on Jan 15 last year.

Anifah said discussions on various cooperation under the Joint Ministerial Committee for Iskandar Malaysia were part of

the itinerary.

"Discussion will delve into the transport, tourism, immigration and industrial cooperation fields. Both sides will further explore new initiatives between Malaysia and Singapore at all levels."

Anifah said bilateral ties between both nations were excellent and were expected to be further boosted during the retreat.

Najib was welcomed by Singapore Foreign Minister K. Shanmugam on his arrival at Changi Airport earlier yesterday.

Later, Najib and his wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, had a private dinner hosted by Lee and his wife, Ho Ching, at the Fullerton Bay Hotel overlooking the Marina Bay waterfront.

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