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PRIME NEWS

PMs to discuss fast rail link

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BOOSTING BILATERAL COOPERATION:

Najib, Hsien Loong to also talk about Iskandar Malaysia at 5th leaders' retreat

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak will meet his Singaporean counterpart Lee Hsien Loong this morning to review the progress in bilateral relations and discuss ways to boost cooperation.

Since yesterday, the two prime ministers and their ministers have been engaged in the 5th Malaysia-Singapore Leaders' Retreat, a key bilateral platform for both governments to drive forward relations between the two countries.

A senior officer with the Foreign Affairs Ministry told the *New Straits Times* that several hot-button issues, including the proposed high-speed rail link between the republic and here, would be discussed.

It is expected that the meeting will also touch on matters relating to economics, science and technology and Iskandar Malaysia, the main southern development corridor in Johor that neighbours Singapore.

After the meeting concludes, Najib and Lee will release a joint statement later today on the out-



Datuk Seri Najib Razak and his wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, with Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and his wife, Ho Ching, enjoy a cruise at the Putrajaya lake yesterday. Bernama pic

come of this year's leaders' retreat.

The retreat, held alternately by Malaysia and Singapore, provides the leaders with an avenue to explore and discuss new initiatives and collaborations to strengthen bilateral ties.

During the previous meeting, which took place in February last

year in Singapore, the leaders agreed on a high-speed rail link between Singapore and Kuala Lumpur, which would significantly cut travel time between Kuala Lumpur and Singapore to just 90 minutes.

Lee, accompanied by wife Ho Ching and eight Singapore ministers, arrived here yesterday after-

noon to visit the city and to get an update on recent developments.

This included a visit to the Petronas Twin Towers, where he was briefed on Petronas. Both Lee and his wife later attended a private dinner hosted by Najib and his wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor.

The accompanying Singapore ministers also attended a dinner

hosted by their counterparts.

Last year, bilateral trade between Malaysia and Singapore increased to US\$57.4 billion (RM188.4 billion) from US\$57 billion in 2012.

Singapore is Malaysia's second largest source of imports, worth a total of US\$25.5 billion (RM83.7 billion) last year. **Additional reporting by Adrian Lai**