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Najib: Common goals bind Singapore and Malaysia

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PETALING JAYA: Malaysia and Singapore should continue to cooperate instead of competing against each other as both countries share a special bond, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

Writing in his blog in conjunction with the republic's 50th anniversary, Najib urged Singaporeans not to judge Malaysia by what appeared

on social media or by politically motivated statements from certain people trying to run down the country.

"I will ensure that Malaysia remains stable and safe – for guests and Malaysians alike.

"The reality is that we share your aspirations for good governance; for a strong, inclusive and sustainable economy based on sound fundamentals; and for stability, harmony and diversity," he said.

These common goals, said Najib,

was the reason why Malaysia and Singapore made good partners.

Malaysia, he added, had a special interest in its neighbour as both countries were bound by a shared history and geography.

Najib, who was in Singapore to attend its 50th anniversary celebration on Sunday, said even as a 12-year-old in 1965, he had been aware of the significance of Malaysia gaining a new neighbour.

Despite differences, Malaysia and Singapore, he said, had achieved

the most when working together – in setting up Asean in 1967, for instance, and being each other's second largest trading partner after China.

"I am pleased that while Iskandar Malaysia and Penang have been the main focus of investment from Singapore, investors are now beginning to look further afield, including Sabah and Sarawak," he said.

Najib said last year, the total number of visits from Singapore was 13.9 million, a 5.7% increase

from 2013.

"Tourism Malaysia is hoping we can attract 14.5 million guests from Singapore," he said.

He also cited the signing of the Points of Agreement in 2010 – after a 20-year deadlock – as an example how Malaysia and Singapore chose to move forward in a spirit of mutual benefit.

"Our future is as partners. I am pleased with the results of our closer relations and look forward to achieving more," he said.