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Newspaper	The Star
Date	24 May 2015

Najib on track to boost ties during Japan visit

The Star - 24/5/2015

TOKYO: A packed schedule, which includes an audience with the Emperor and Empress of Japan, awaits Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak on his three-day official visit here starting today.

The Prime Minister, who is accompanied by his wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, will be granted an audience with Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko at the Imperial Palace on the second day of his visit.

The visit, at the invitation of the Japanese government, follows



increasing bilateral trade between Malaysia and Japan which totalled RM137.45bil (US\$42bil) last year.

This is a 1.4% rise from the previous year, making Japan Malaysia's third largest trading partner after China and Singapore.

Although imports from Japan

shrunk 2.9% to RM54.75bil (US\$16.74bil) last year, there is one technology that Japan will want to impress Najib with - its expertise on high speed rail.

Najib will be briefed by Japan Railway on its Shinkansen high-speed system and the development around Tokyo Station, the country's main intercity rail terminal.

Several Japanese companies - Hitachi Ltd, Sumitomo Corporation and Mitsui & Co - have indicated interest in the 330km Kuala Lumpur-Singapore high speed rail

link project.

This is certain to be discussed during Najib's meeting with his counterpart Shinzo Abe.

The Prime Minister is also scheduled to have lunch with the Japanese Prime Minister at the Akasaka Palace, the state guest-house.

The Prime Minister will be accorded an official welcoming ceremony by a guard-of-honour from the Self-Defence Forces.

During his visit, Najib will also address the World Islamic

Economic Forum-Alliance Forum Foundation Roundtable 2015 in Tokyo and hold a dialogue with students of Tohoku University in Sendai which is one of the most prestigious institutions in Japan and among the world's top 50.

Besides the roundtable, which will see international investors and business leaders discuss topics ranging from halal business to Islamic banking, Najib will also meet with captains of industry and members of the Malaysian community here.