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Malaysia, Singapore seek to strengthen ties

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STRONG BOND:
Both countries share history and heritage

KUALA LUMPUR



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak and his Singaporean counterpart, Lee Hsien Loong (second from right), being briefed on art exhibits at the 'Titian Budaya' festival yesterday. Pic by Zulfadhli Zulkifli

MALAYSIA and Singapore's top leaders have expressed their desire to deepen ties between their countries, underpinned by their shared heritage and history.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak praised his Singaporean counterpart Lee Hsien Loong for sharing the same goals and together realising the three-month arts and cultural festival 'Titian Budaya' in celebrating 50 years of bilateral relations.

"I believe this programme, 'Titian Budaya', gives a new meaning to this relationship being dedicated to a long, shared history.

"I think both countries have reached a certain level of growth and

development to the extent that we are now able to appreciate the finer things, the sophistication and the richness that are abundant in both societies," he said at the launch of the festival with Lee here yesterday.

Najib said not only did the two countries have a shared history and heritage, but their peoples had families living on both sides of the border.

In expressing his appreciation, Lee described the relationship between Malaysia and Singapore as strong and said the two countries

would always be close to each other.

"Malaysia and Singapore relations is like the Malay proverb 'bagaikan aur dengan tebing' or 'like the bamboo and the river bank,'" he said.

Lee, who is here for the 27th Asean Summit and related meetings over the weekend, noted that many development projects had been carried out by both countries and there were others in the pipeline, such as the

Kuala Lumpur-Singapore High Speed Rail.

The festival, which showcases cultural programmes of 400 Singaporean and Malaysian artistes and creative professionals, is held to celebrate 50 years of Malaysia-Singapore relations.

Malaysia co-hosts the arts initiative with Singapore to highlight the common cultural roots both countries share. *Bernama*