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Najib: Asian nations must capitalise on **common ground**

> Learn from each other, share best practices, and seek new ways of collaboration, says PM

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KUALA LUMPUR: Asian countries need to forge stronger ties and capitalise on what they have in common towards building a borderless Asia, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak.

Speaking at the India-based Economic Times – Asian Business Leaders Conclave here yesterday, Najib said the 21st century is set to be the “Asian Century”, which is already a reality in many ways with the construction of new institutions

and frameworks that have come from Asia, formulated by Asians or based in the continent.

“That is as it should be. The centre of gravity of power, population and prosperity has long been shifting eastwards, and it is right that we should take responsibility for, and control of, our own destinies. We seek friendly relations with all, but the days when far-off powers seek to dictate the futures and the policies of Asian countries are over,” he said.

In a borderless Asia, Najib said, diversity is shared, countries work

together in an inclusive and sustainable manner, as well as rely on their own innovation to create new technologies, foster their own talent and set new global standards for corporate governance, productivity and dynamism.

“We have youthful and increasingly well-educated population. We are blessed with many resources and even in these challenging times for the world economy, we have still been maintaining growth rates that are the envy of Europe and the West.

“We need to take the next steps. To forge stronger inter-Asian ties. To capitalise on what we have in common. To learn from each other, to share best practices and

seek new ways of collaborating to the benefit of all,” he added.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the event via video conference.

Commenting on the relationship between India and Malaysia, Najib said trade has increased by more than fourfold from 2003 to 2015. Last year, Malaysia’s trade with India amounted to nearly RM47 billion, an increase of 3.5% from 2014.

In 2015, India was Malaysia’s 10th largest trade partner, 7th largest export destination and 12th largest import source while Malaysia was India’s 14th largest trade partner, 19th largest export destination and 15th largest import source.

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