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TPP — Putrajaya, Tokyo on same page

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TOKYO • Putrajaya and Tokyo are on the same page that the proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) should come into force and Putrajaya hoped the strategic importance of the free trade pact will be recognised by the incoming Donald Trump administration.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Najib Razak said today's meeting between Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Trump in the US is very much awaited by all TPP member countries.

"Hopefully, the strategic importance of TPP will be recognised by the incoming administration as well as by all participating countries," Najib said during a joint press conference with Abe here yesterday.

Najib said Putrajaya and Tokyo have passed the resolutions in their respective Parliaments to participate in the TPP.

"It is clear for Malaysia to go ahead for TPP, and hope that the TPP agreement will come into force," said Najib, who is on his second day of a three-day working visit to Japan.

Earlier, Najib and Abe led



Najib (left) has reassured Abe that the process to arrive at the final decision (on the HSR project agreement) will be done in a transparent and objective manner

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their respective delegation for a bilateral meeting at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) here.

Abe said both countries will carry forward with their domestic procedures respectively for the early entry into force of the TPP agreement.

Besides Japan and Malaysia, TPP includes Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, the US and Vietnam.

The idea, which was mooted by outgoing US President Barack Obama, will involve a free trade area covering about 40% of global economic power.

However, Trump, during his election campaign, was reported to have called for the trade deal to be aborted.

On the Malaysia-Singapore high-speed rail (HSR) project, Najib said Malaysia and Singapore are on track to sign the joint project agreement early

next month.

He said international tender for the project would be called by the fourth-quarter of 2017.

The HSR project was reported to have been estimated to cost between RM60 billion and RM65 billion. It will link Kuala Lumpur and Singapore in 90 minutes and had attracted the interests of suppliers from many countries including China, Japan, South Korea and Europe.

Najib said all issues related to the joint project agreement have "more or less" been settled.

"I have reassured Prime Minister Abe that the process to arrive at the final decision (on the project agreement) will be done in a transparent and objective manner," said Najib.

Meanwhile, Najib said Malaysia has offered its technical expertise to Japan in the development of the halal industry in this country as it woos more Muslim tourists.

The two leaders earlier witnessed the exchange of notes between Japanese Ambassador to Malaysia Dr Makio Miyagawa and Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) DG Datuk Seri Ahmad Puzi Kahar, concerning the grant of two Japanese Coast Guard vessels to MMEA.

Najib and Abe also witnessed the exchange of Memoranda of Cooperation between Japan External Trade Organisation (Jetro) and Malaysian Investment Development Authority, and Jetro and Malaysia External Trade Corp at the PMO here. — Bernama