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# Najib: Give Trump time to settle down

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## Fate of Trans-Pacific Partnership pact will be decided in due time, says PM

**TOKYO:** A United States administration under Donald Trump may make many world leaders feel uneasy, but don't count Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak among them.

Weighing in on the shock election victory of the American businessman-cum-reality TV personality eight days into his transition, the Prime Minister said he knew Trump personally and had played golf with him.

"He has invited me to his residence and introduced me to his wife and children. I even have a photograph of us playing golf.

"(Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo) Abe said I'm the only Prime Minister who has played golf with President Obama and Trump!" Najib told a press conference with Malaysian journalists as he wrapped up his three-day visit to Tokyo.

President Barack Obama was the first US president to visit Malaysia since 1966, visiting Kuala Lumpur in 2014 and again in 2015.

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in Tokyo



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Najib was asked if he was confident of maintaining warm relations with the US under Trump, who will be sworn in as the 45th US President on Jan 20.

The Prime Minister, who recently made a high-profile visit to Beijing, said strengthening Malaysia's relations with the US, China and Japan would not be at each other's expense.

"It is not a zero-sum game. Malaysia has very close ties with China, our largest trading partner, but that does not preclude us from developing ties with Japan or the US," he said.

On Trump's 200-day five-point plan to reshape US trade, one of

which involved scrapping the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) pact which Malaysia and Japan had approved, Najib said the president-elect should be given time to settle down first.

"We have to wait and see. What he says when he is running for office might not be the same as what he decides when he is in office. As leader of the free world, what he does will play in his mind very significantly," he added.

On making his third successive annual trip to Japan since 2014, Najib said Tokyo had made it clear to him that the Malaysia-Singapore High Speed Rail (HSR) project was their main priority.

"Almost the entire weight of the Japanese government and private sector is leaning towards trying to convince both governments to accept the Shinkansen (Japanese bullet train) as their choice," he said.

Najib said he assured Abe that the international bidding process, which will be opened in the third

quarter of 2017, would be fair and transparent.

"We have to get an international third party to evaluate the tender on a very objective basis and refer to both governments.

"We are committed to ensuring the integrity of the tender process, and cannot prejudice who's going to win at this stage ... the bidding process has not even started," he pointed out.

On his personal experience of having ridden on the Shinkansen, the PM said it would not be appropriate for him to give his personal views.

He said the project would not be decided based on just passenger experience.

"There is the financial package to be considered, over 25 years, and other elements, one of which is of course passenger comfort in whatever system that is going to be decided by both countries," he added.

Malaysia and Singapore will sign the bilateral agreement on the HSR

on Dec 5.

Najib also revealed that an experimental pilot project was underway between Japan's IHI Corp, Sime Darby Group and the Malaysian Palm Oil Board (MPOB) on utilising oil palm waste to produce energy, fertiliser and for other agricultural uses.

"They are also testing how to increase yield. If this proves viable, it will alter the prospects of the industry by value adding and giving us better returns," he added.

Najib also said Malaysia had offered to act as halal adviser to Japan, which is preparing to host the 2020 Summer Olympics.

"There will be thousands of athletes and millions of tourists coming over to Japan. There will be a huge demand for halal food," he added.

He said Malaysia had received recognition from the World Trade Organisation and United Nations on halal certification and this would be advantageous to Japan as it prepares to host the Olympics.