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Newspaper	NEW STRAITS TIMES
Date	8 SEPTEMBER 2016

Najib to meet Thai PM tomorrow

NSF- 8/9/2016

BANGKOK: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak will meet his Thai counterpart Prayuth Chan o Cha tomorrow to discuss several key bilateral issues on security and trade.

The Thailand cabinet in a statement on Tuesday night said the meeting, to be held during the 6th Malaysia-Thailand Annual Consultation, would see both leaders looking into measures to boost border management, combat terrorism and cyber security, among others.

At the same time, Najib and Prayuth are expected to delve into the ongoing insurgency in southern Thailand, to moot peace talks between the rebels and the Thai government.

On economy, Thailand will look into increasing trade value with Malaysia to RM120 billion by next year.

A number of proposals behind the objective include promotion of border trade, creation of a Perlis-Narathiwat special economic zone, a new Sungai Golok bridge project and expanding the Malaysian dual-track rail from Hatyai to Padang Besar.

Also listed is the need to establish a Malaysian-Thai business association, promotion of halal businesses and education for youths in southern Thailand.

Najib is scheduled to arrive in Bangkok in the evening today after attending the Asean Summit 2016 in Vientiane, Laos.

In an interview yesterday, Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation's Trade Commissioner in Thailand Niqman Rafee M. Sahar said since January until June this year, trade value stood at RM86 billion.

Of this, about RM50 billion were derived from border trade value.

Niqman said trade focus had been placed on food, petroleum-based products, electronics and spin-offs from the halal industry. **By Syed Umar Ariff**