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## A rousing welcome for prime minister

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**NEW DELHI:** Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak was accorded an official welcoming ceremony at the Rashtrapati Bhavan Presidential Palace here yesterday in conjunction with his six-day visit to India.

Accompanied by wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor and several cabinet ministers, Najib arrived at the Presidential Palace at 9am and was welcomed by his host and counterpart, Narendra Modi.

Najib inspected a guard-of-honor mounted by the Indian Armed Forces before being introduced to India's cabinet ministers.

In his brief remarks to the media, Najib, with Modi by his side, said he thanked the premier for the invitation and was looking forward to the visit.

"I am confident that this visit

will enhance our bilateral relationship to a higher level."

He proceeded to lay a wreath at Gandhi Smriti, Raj Ghat, a national shrine where the father of India, Mahatma Gandhi, was cremated on Jan 31, 1948, following his assassination.

Najib paid a courtesy call on Indian President Pranab Mukherjee and Vice-President Mohamad Hamid Ansari.

The visit underlines the strong bilateral relations between the two countries, which have been established for 60 years.

The visit, at the invitation of Modi, will be Najib's third to India since assuming office as prime minister in 2009.

He also held a restricted meeting with Modi, and attended a bilateral meeting with senior mem-

bers of both delegations.

Najib arrived in the southern Indian city of Chennai on Thursday where he attended an official reception hosted by the acting Governor of Tamil Nadu, Vidhyasagar Rao, meetings with the business community and also met with Tamil film superstar Rajnikanth.

Apart from the bilateral meeting, Najib will also hold dialogue sessions with leaders and captains of industry from major business sectors in India.

Najib is scheduled to travel to Jaipur today to attend a high level discussion on the progress of Malaysian companies in infrastructure projects in Rajasthan.

He is also expected to attend a business luncheon and the 7th Global Science and Innovation Advisory Council Meeting (GSI-

AC) here tomorrow, before officiating the High Commission of Malaysia's new complex on Tuesday.

India is Malaysia's 10th largest trading partner, seventh largest

export destination, 12th largest source of imports, and is also Malaysia's 20th largest investor, with total investments worth US\$2.31 billion (RM10 billion).

**Bernama**