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TAMIL NADU GIVES NAJIB ROUSING WELCOME

Prime Minister holds meetings with state's governor and chief minister

CHENNAI

PRIME Minister. Datuk Seri Najib Razak arrived here yesterday as part of his six-day visit to India.

His third since becoming prime minister in 2009, Najib's visit will further elevate existing strong bilateral ties that had spanned 60 years to greater heights.

The significance of his visit is evident from the buzz in the local press. A line-up of billboards in the city's streets welcomed him.

Najib, who will also cover Jaipur and New Delhi during his trip, is here at the invitation of his counterpart, Narendra Modi.

His arrival at Chennai International Airport was greeted by High Commissioner of Malaysia to India Datuk Hidayat Abdul Hamid and senior Indian officials.

Najib, accompanied by wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, was then greeted on arrival at the ITC Grand Chola hotel by Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam, Special Envoy for Infrastructure to India and South Asia Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu, Chief Secretary to the Government



YUSHAIMI
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Tan Sri Ali Hamsa and Foreign Ministry secretary-general Datuk Ramlan Ibrahim, among others.

Later, he had a meeting with acting Tamil Nadu Governor Vidhyasagar Rao and Chief Minister Eddapadi Palaniswamy at the governor's residence before attending dinner with the dignitaries.

Today, Najib will attend a meeting with the Malaysian Associated Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MAICCI).

He will also meet Malaysians and students.

Najib will perform Friday prayers at the famous Anjuman Mosque before leaving for New Delhi.

India is among Malaysia's biggest trading partners and export destination.

Relations have blossomed since Najib's first visit in 2010, with the establishment of the Malaysia-India Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (Ceca), partnerships in defence ventures, counter-terrorism, tourism and culture, infor-



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak and his wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, being welcomed at Chennai International Airport yesterday. BERNAMA PIC

mation technology, and services and infrastructure projects among the key achievements.

A slew of memoranda of understanding worth about RM30 billion are expected to be signed this time round.

Najib's trip to India further cements his standing as a world leader savvy on bilateral and trade ties, coming on the back of visits by Saudi ruler King Salman Abdulaziz Al-Saud and French President Francois Hollande.

Saudi Arabia had, among oth-

ers, agreed to inject RM31.08 billion in investment through its petroleum company, Saudi Aramco, for the Refinery and Petrochemical Integrated Development (Rapid) in Pengerang, Johor.

In November, Najib had also visited China, gaining investments worth RM143.64 billion in 14 business arrangements.

Political analyst Anbumani Balan said Najib's India visit further demonstrated his commitment to strengthen existing relation-

ship with the country.

"His visit to Chennai, for example, shows his commitment in many ways as we know that Chennai is regarded as the heart and soul of the Indian community in Malaysia," said the former journalist, who covered Najib's first visit in 2010.

The Indian community in Malaysia, he said, had strong family and trade ties with India.

"We are quite literally connected to each other for many years.