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# PM: E-visa boosts national security

System strikes balance between courting visitors and preventing harm, says Najib

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**Honoured:** Najib and Mustafar inspecting a guard of honour during the e-visa facility and system launch in Putrajaya. — Bernama

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**PUTRAJAYA:** Malaysia will balance its long tradition of warmly welcoming visitors, with its vigilance and preparedness to maintain security and sovereignty.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said the country benefited tremendously from the tourism industry, earning RM13bil last year from some 26.7 million arrivals.

"While we welcome all genuine visitors, we must continue to guard the nation from external threats in today's borderless world.

"The initiative to have an e-visa facility and the setting up of the e-visa communications centre by the Immigration Department can help strike a balance between encouraging genuine visitors and keeping harm at bay," he said at its launch yesterday.

Also present were Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and Immigration director-general Datuk Seri Mustafar Ali.

Najib said that since the e-visa's introduction last year, nationalities from, among others, China, India,

Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal, could apply for visas online.

The system offers visitors a quick, convenient and secure way of applying for a Malaysian visa, with successful applicants getting their document within 48 hours of applying.

The e-visa facility is linked to the Immigration system, and applicants are vetted through a series of real-time online security checks.

Currently, citizens of 33 countries need to apply for a visa if they want to come to Malaysia as a tourist, a student or for business.

Najib said that he was pleased with the e-visa communications centre because it enabled Immigration to use digital technology to better keep an eye on visitor traffic.

"I am hopeful that the introduction of this state-of-the-art facility will dramatically transform the way the department goes about its tasks and increases its ability to monitor visa-related data from around the world.

"I also believe the centre is a strategic platform that can be leveraged upon by relevant agencies — those important links in protecting the country," he said.