

**Ex-Japanese PM to open institute with Najib**  
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KUALA LUMPUR: It will be a nostalgic moment when Dr Yukio Hatoyama meets Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak at the official opening of the Malaysia-Japan International Institute of Technology (MJIIT) here on Friday.

Dr Hatoyama was Japan's prime minister when he agreed to a request by Najib during their first encounter in Tokyo in 2010 that the long-dormant project be revived.

For his role, the Japanese government has picked the former prime minister to represent it at the opening ceremony.

Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda is unable to make it due to Parliamentary commitments.

MJIIT Distinguished Ambassador Masahiko Horie said Hatoyama, who resigned as PM in June 2010, would fly in from Europe to jointly declare open the institute with Najib.

"The institute will be a key element in our bilateral relations," he said.

The institute, located within the grounds of the UTM International Campus in Jalan Semarak, was mooted in 2001 by Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad to introduce Japanese-style education in Malaysia.

It was financed with a yen loan equivalent to RM248mil and had its maiden intake of 96 students last September. Two technical courses are being offered currently.

Twenty-four Japanese universities have formed a consortium to lend academic support to the institute.

Horie, a former Ambassador to Malaysia, said two more courses – Environment & Green Technology, and Management of Technology – would be introduced.

"I have already secured sponsorship from Japanese firms for our students to be enrolled at the institute as well. In the future, Malaysian graduates of the institute will be sent to Japan to take up internship with Japanese firms," he added.

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