

**PM: Malaysia ready to be gateway for Indian products into Asean**  
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**By P ARUNA**

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia is prepared to facilitate the entry of Indian entrepreneurs into Southeast Asia, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

"Both Asean and India are looking forward to accelerate the pace of development of their respective economies," he said at the launching of the Asean-India SME Conference here.

"The conference will focus on how entrepreneurs from both sides can collaborate to take advantage of the business opportunities that will be unfolding in this part of the world," he said in his keynote address.

There are now 77 Indian companies operating in Malaysia, including 70 Indian joint ventures.

"Since its beginnings about a decade ago, business relations between Asean and India have seen tremendous growth," Najib added.

Malaysia is the 27th largest foreign investor in India.

Najib said the challenge now was to find ways to support the growth of small and medium industries in the country and reward innovative companies.

"We have found that it is inspiring for businesses when we develop recognition programmes to support SMEs that do well," he said before presenting the SME Innovation Awards to six selected companies.

The grand prize winner, Penchem Technology Sdn Bhd, received RM1mil in prize money, a trophy and a certificate.

The company, which beat 32 other finalists, was also named winner of the "Best Innovation Award" in the manufacturing sector.

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