

**PM lauds Australia's entry to bloc**  
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SPURRING GROWTH: Najib says having Canberra in New Growth Corridor is pertinent

MELBOURNE: PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak says Australia's inclusion in the New Growth Corridor that connects China to countries in Asia and the Middle East will drive global growth and prosperity.

He said Australia's inclusion will bring together some of the world's most robust economies.

"In my previous messages to the World Chinese Economic Forum (WCEF), I had described the emerging New Economic Corridor as connecting China through Southeast Asia and India to the Middle East.

"This year, it is pertinent and relevant to have Australia included," he said in his message to the Fourth World Chinese Economic Forum to be held here on Nov 12 and 13.

Najib said the HSBC Bank had recently forecast that by 2050, 10 of the world's largest economies would be in this region -- China, India, Japan, South Korea, Indonesia, the Philippines, Australia, Malaysia, Thailand and Pakistan.

"Hence, there exists tremendous opportunities for regional cooperation and business collaborations within this New Silk Road."

He said the Malaysian government supported the WCEF "as a private sector-driven and business-led initiative to enhance regional economic integration and cooperation and to forge strategic alliances between the business people in the region".

Najib congratulated the Asian Strategy & Leadership Institute (Asli) for organising the forum and he extended a warm welcome to all delegates to the next WCEF which will be held in Kuala Lumpur in November next year.

Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin and the First vice-chairman of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade Dr Zhang Wei will be the keynote speakers at the forum here next month.

The forum, at the Melbourne Convention Centre, will feature 57 high-profile speakers from 15 countries. More than 300 delegates are expected to attend.

Asli chief executive officer and director Tan Sri Dr Michael Yeoh and Asli senior vice-president and chief strategy & programme officer Ng Yeen Seen were here last week to check arrangements for the forum, which had generated a great deal of interest among the Australian national and state governments and the business community.

Welcoming speeches will be delivered by the former governor-general of Australia and Global Foundation chairman, Maj-Gen Michael Jeffrey, and the Governor of the State of Victoria, Alex Chernov.

The Australian Minister of Trade, Dr Craig Emerson; the Chairman, Special Task Force -- "Australia in the Asian Century", Dr Ken Henry and the Vice-Chancellor of Monash University, Prof Edward Byrne, will be among the prominent Australian speakers.

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