

**Najib Hosts Dinner In Honour Of Shinzo Abe**  
**Bernama**  
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PUTRAJAYA, July 25 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak Thursday night hosted an official dinner in honour of Japan Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at Seri Perdana, here.

Present were the prime minister's wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Anifah Aman and International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed.

Abe arrived here today on a two-day working visit to Malaysia in conjunction with his tour of Southeast Asia which also includes Singapore and the Philippines.

Najib in his speech before the dinner said: "It is rare that a leader gets to lend his name to an economic policy which is 'Abenomics' and over the past few months, Japan's resurgence has become real.

"Today, it is one of Asia's most important success stories, sending ripples across the region.

"Thirty years ago, Malaysian policymakers 'looked East', seeking inspiration from Japan's example, sending graduates to learn the principles and practices behind Japan's industrial success and welcoming Japanese investment into Malaysia.

"Today, Malaysia is looking East once more, as Japanese capital and expertise lay the foundation for the next stage of Malaysia's development and companies like Japan Toray Industries Corporation and Toshiba are already contributing to Malaysia's economic transformation.

"As Japan's economy grows stronger, I hope more Japanese companies will take advantage of new opportunities in energy, transport and services in Malaysia.

"As we seek to build on thirty years of cooperation, I believe there are good prospects for closer collaboration on our shared priorities, regional security, development and economic reform."

Najib said he had been greatly encouraged by Japan's continued commitment to broadening Malaysia-Japan bilateral cooperation, on everything from green technology to training and education.

"As the global centre of gravity shifts towards Asia, we as Asian nations should reaffirm our commitment to cooperation for the benefit of our people, our countries, and our continent," he said.

Abe in his speech said the Japanese government had approved the exemption of visas for short-term tourists from Malaysia as part of the strengthening of bilateral relations between Malaysia and Japan.

"Malaysia has increased its presence in the regional and global arenas. Since it obtained its independence, Malaysia has developed good relationship in the economic sphere, cultural exchange and people-to-people exchange with Japan through the Look East Policy

introduced by Dr Mahathir in the 1980s," he said.

Abe also praised Najib's efforts in strengthening the Malaysian economy through various initiatives to achieve Vision 2020, therefore, Malaysia and Japan must continue to work together in promoting regional understanding.

"Malaysia has also been the number one destination for Japanese tourists for seven years in a row," Abe said.

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