

## **Official Welcoming Ceremony For Najib At Abu Dhabi Presidential Palace**

**Bernama**

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**By Sharifah Nur Shahrizad Syed Mohamed Sharer**

ABU DHABI, May 18 (Bernama) -- The United Arab Emirates (UAE) rolled out a grand welcoming ceremony at Mushrif Palace, here, Sunday for visiting Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

Amid the sunny afternoon, the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, Prince Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan warmly welcomed Najib and wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor as the couple arrived at the Presidential Palace forecourt.

The national anthems of both countries were played followed by the firing of a 21-gun salute.

The prime minister and the Crown Prince later adjourned to Majlis 1 Hall, where the leaders were introduced to the delegates of both sides, before the two held a restricted meeting.

The trip is Najib's second official visit to the UAE since assuming the premiership in April 2009.

The prime minister, who arrived in the UAE capital last night for a three-day official visit, will have a hectic schedule here today, including witnessing the signing of several agreements and memoranda of understanding (MoU), which will create new ventures and boost cooperation between the two countries.

Two MoUs, namely in tourism and higher education as well as an agreement of cooperation pertaining to Islamic affairs will be inked at Mushrif Palace in the presence of the prime minister and the Crown Prince.

The MoU on tourism will boost cooperation in tourism-related activities between the National Council of Tourism and Antiquities, UAE and the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Malaysia.

UAE is one of the most important tourist markets for Malaysia. In 2013, 19,880 tourists from the region visited Malaysia compared to 18,233 in 2012, an increase of 9.3 per cent.

On the other hand, the UAE is a tourist destination for Malaysians. In 2013, 19,830 Malaysians visited the UAE, a slight increase of 8.76 per cent from 18,233 recorded in 2012.

The MoU on cooperation in the field of higher education between the Ministry of Higher

Education and Scientific Research, UAE and the Ministry of Education, Malaysia will pave the way for closer cooperation that is mutually beneficial for both countries.

The agreement between 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) and Abu Dhabi Government through its General Authority of Islamic Affairs and Endowments (AWQAF), UAE will, among others, see the construction of a mosque, Islamic resource centre and Permata centre, which is the brainchild of Rosmah.

In the economic sphere, the signing of an MoU between Malaysia's Federal Land Development Authority (Felda) and Abu Dhabi-based Lulu International Group, the biggest hypermarket chain in the Middle East, will put the business collaboration profile to a more meaningful stage as the prime minister is also scheduled to witness the signing ceremony tomorrow.

The MoU will encourage the marketing of Malaysian food products in the LuLu hypermarkets, while expanding their market scope with the establishment of the hypermarkets in Malaysia.

Despite the busy schedule in Abu Dhabi Sunday, Najib and Rosmah are also scheduled to depart for Dubai to pay a courtesy call on His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai.

Najib is also scheduled to visit Al Maryah Island, the heart of Abu Dhabi's new central business district, followed by a dinner to be hosted by UAE.

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