

Najib Arrives In Astana For Three-day Official Visit To Kazakhstan

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ASTANA (KAZAKHSTAN), May 22 (Bernama) -- Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak arrived here Thursday for a three-day official visit to Kazakhstan to enhance bilateral ties in various fields.

Najib was accompanied by his wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor on the visit, his second to the country since 2011, which is at the invitation of Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev.

Najib and Rosmah were received at the Astana International Airport by Kazakhstan Minister of Economy and Budget Planning Erbolat Dosayev, Malaysian Second Education Minister Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh, Malaysian Ambassador to Kazakhstan Datuk Hidayat Abdul Hamid and senior government officials from Kazakhstan and Malaysia.

The prime minister then inspected a static guard-of-honour mounted by the Kazakhstan security forces.

Idris as well as Tourism and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz are among those in the Malaysian delegation on this visit.

Najib has been accorded the honour to deliver a keynote address on Friday morning at the Astana Economic Forum as a special guest of President Nazarbayev.

Ambassador Hidayat said Najib's visit was to pave the way for the two countries to enhance bilateral relations in the political, economic, trade and investment fields as well as collaboration in education and tourism.

On Friday afternoon, Najib is scheduled to hold a four-eyed meeting with Kazakhstan Prime Minister Karim Massimov, which will be followed by a delegation meeting to discuss issues of common interest as well as discussions on future opportunities for both countries.

Najib will then be accorded an official welcome at the Presidential Palace where he will hold a four-eyed meeting with Nazarbayev, to be followed by a working dinner.

Kazakhstan, the world's ninth biggest country located in Central Asia, is currently vigorously developing its transport infrastructure in the effort to build land bridges to connect Asia and Europe.

Bilateral trade between Malaysia and Kazakhstan is minimal, recording US\$56 million (about RM180 million) last year, which was in Malaysia's favour.

Malaysia is also increasingly becoming the country of choice for tertiary education for students from

Kazakhstan. Last year saw 1,500 Kazakhstan students in Malaysia.

Malaysia is also a favourite destination for tourists from Kazakhstan, especially during the winter.

Astana is the second coldest capital in the world with the lowest temperature of -40 degrees Celsius during winter ever recorded. The temperature can rise to over 30 degrees Celsius during summer.

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