

Najib: Without Indians, Malaysia won't be what it is today
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The prime minister lauds the contributions of Malaysian Indians to the nation and talks about the warm relations between Malaysia and India, in an opinion piece.

PETALING JAYA: Prime Minister Najib Razak has paid a grand tribute to the contributions of Malaysians of Indian origin.

He says the country would not be doing so well if not for Malaysian Indians, in an opinion piece in The Hindustan Times of India.

Saying Malaysia has the highest percentage of the Indian diaspora outside India, with fully 7% of the population being of Indian origin, he adds:

“And these Malaysian Indians have played a vital role in building our country.”

He adds: “I can truly say that without Malaysian Indians, Malaysia simply would not be what it is today, and they constitute a very special reason why it is so natural for our two countries to forge ever closer and friendlier relations.”

Najib, who is on a six-day visit to India, talks mainly about the warm and growing India-Malaysia relations and the Indian diaspora residing in Malaysia in the piece.

Najib says: “Malaysian Indians have always been at the forefront of governance in Malaysia; of our civil service, business, entertainment, education, and of course, food – which as you may know, is very important to Malaysians!

“Malaysian Indians are a crucial part of our unique diversity, and their cultures and faiths help make up the rich and varied tapestry of our nation – many races and religions, but 1Malaysia.”

He goes on to say that Malaysian Indians have helped the nation keep growth on track, at 4.2% last year.

“They have helped us keep unemployment and inflation low, create millions of new jobs, and build a society that is sustainable, inclusive and heading towards high income status nation – a nation at ease with itself and with its neighbours.”

On the role of the two nations in the world arena, Najib says: “In this, the Asian Century, India and Malaysia have so much to offer each other, the region, and beyond – as examples of moderate, civilised, peaceful countries that prize education, the safety and well-being of our peoples, and the equitable and sustainable pursuit of growth.

“Both our countries are already recognised as leaders in the new emerging order in Asia and the world. Let us continue to work together to build a future based on stability, prosperity and understanding as the centre of the globe moves inexorably to the East.”

He says arriving in India, he was yet again struck by the many similarities between the two nations.

“Malaysia and India have deep and historical ties, going back many centuries. We have both always been trading nations; outward-looking and keen to forge friendships with our neighbours and partners in the region.”

He notes that this year marks the 60th anniversary of formal diplomatic relations between both nations and that Malaysia’s father of independence, Tunku Abdul Rahman, visited India in 1962 while Jawaharlal Nehru, India’s first Prime Minister, visited Malaya in 1937.

Since 1998, Najib says, India has been Malaysia’s largest export destination in the South Asian region, and over the last decade or so trade has increased by more than four-fold.

He gives some figures and rankings regarding trade between both nations, including the fact that India is Malaysia’s twentieth largest investor, with total investment worth US\$2.31 billion.

Malaysia, meanwhile, is ranked as the twenty-first largest foreign investor in India globally, and the second largest from Asean.

Najib ends with: “It is always a pleasure to be here in India. I hope that on this visit, our family-like bonds will grow even stronger, for the benefit of both our countries and both our peoples.”

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