

India, Malaysia to discuss US\$5 billion in deals

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India analysts say ties between the two nations are so much better under Najib than they were when Mahathir Mohamad was prime minister.

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia and India are to discuss projects worth US\$5 billion during Prime Minister Najib Razak's current visit to India

The two nations are scheduled to sign about 15 business agreements during Najib's six-day visit, which started yesterday. His first stop was Chennai. He will also visit Jaipur and New Delhi.

PTI reported that India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Najib would hold wide-ranging talks, including about security, defence and counter-terrorism.

It quoted Jaideep Mazumdar, joint secretary in the external affairs ministry, as saying: "Projects under discussion during the visit would amount to around US\$5 billion."

Jaideep said the two sides would try to take forward the decisions taken in areas of security and defence in November 2015 during Modi's visit to Malaysia.

Meanwhile, Livemint quoted Jaideep as saying: "It is safe to say that our bilateral relations have never been as good as they are today."

The visit comes in the context of the 60th anniversary of India-Malaysia diplomatic relations and India marking the completion of 25 years of ties with Asean.

Livemint quoted analysts as saying ties between India and Malaysia improved when Najib became prime minister and that bilateral ties under former Malaysian prime minister Mahathir Mohamad were far from satisfactory.

It said India firms had moved to Malaysia in a big way, making it a base to do business with other Asean countries.

Malaysia, Jaideep said, had invested US\$6 billion in India and "an additional US\$6 billion worth of projects have been executed," according to the Livemint report.

India's investments in Malaysia were worth US\$2.5 billion, he added.

He said other areas of cooperation included pilots from India going to Malaysia to train their counterparts in operating Sukhoi-30 frontline fighter aircraft between 2008-2010.

Najib is scheduled to attend a trade expo by the Malaysia-India Business Council Business Forum and the Global Science and Innovation Advisory Council Meeting.

Najib is accompanied by his wife Rosmah Mansor and several Cabinet ministers, senior officials and about 80-100 business leaders.

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