

## **Malaysia, India Are Leaders In Asia's New Emerging Order, Says Najib**

**From D. Arul Rajoo**

NEW DELHI, March 31 (Bernama) -- As Malaysia and India are already recognised as leaders in the new emerging order in Asia and the world, both countries should work even more closely together, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

He said they should 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.

"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," he said.

In an article he wrote for Hindustan Times, the prime minister, who is currently on an official six-day visit to India, said 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. This year marks the 60th anniversary of formal diplomatic relations," he wrote.

Najib said links between the two nations are strong, adding that since 1998, 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.

India is currently Malaysia's tenth largest trading partner, seventh largest export destination, 12th largest source of imports, and is also currently Malaysia's 20th largest investor, with total investment worth US\$2.31 billion.

The premier also pointed out that Malaysia has the highest percentage of the Indian diaspora outside India, with seven percent of its population being of Indian origin.

"And these Malaysian Indians have played a vital role in building our country. 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!

Najib said he 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 was so natural for the two countries to forge ever closer and friendlier relations.

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