

Najib in Sydney for ASEAN-Australia special summit

BERNAMA

16/03/2018

From Kamarul Ariffin Md Yassin

SYDNEY, March 16 (Bernama) -- Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak arrived here on Friday evening to attend the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit 2018 scheduled for the weekend.

The special aircraft carrying Najib touched down at the Kingsford Smith Airport at 10.48 pm (7.48 pm Malaysian time).

Najib was accompanied by his wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor.

On hand to welcome them were Assistant Minister to the Australian Prime Minister James McGrath , New South Wales Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation Matt Kean and Malaysian High Commissioner to Australia Datuk Sudha Devi Vasudevan.

Najib is scheduled to deliver a keynote address at the closing segment of the Counter-Terrorism Conference on the first day of the summit.

Najib is the only ASEAN leader invited to deliver a speech at the closing segment of the conference on Saturday. The other leader to address the conference will be Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull.

The Malaysian Prime Minister is also scheduled to hold a bilateral meeting with Turnbull on Saturday morning, before the summit begins.

This is the first time Australia is hosting a summit with all ASEAN leaders.

The summit is organised to discuss the future direction and cooperation between ASEAN and Australia. It is also to commemorate the elevation of ASEAN-Australia relations to a strategic partnership.

Australia and ASEAN have been close partners since the inception of the regional body in 1967. ASEAN economies as a group are one of Australia's top three trading partners, and ASEAN and Australia cooperate closely to address shared security challenges facing the region.

The special summit is an unprecedented opportunity to strengthen the partnership and enhance the region's security and prosperity.

During the special summit, ASEAN and Australia will build on their deep legacy of cooperation to establish a contemporary and outward-looking partnership for the rapidly changing world. They will unlock new opportunities for the economies and strengthen their joint work to countering terrorism and other common security threats.

The ASEAN-Australia Special Summit comprises three sessions, namely the ASEAN-Australia Leaders' Summit, the ASEAN-Australia Business Summit and the ASEAN-Australia Counter-Terrorism Conference.

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