

## **Najib's visit to Australia will enhance bilateral relations**

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KUALA LUMPUR, March 17 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak is confident that his two-day working visit to Australia will enhance the ASEAN-Australia and Malaysia-Australia bilateral relations.

Najib, who is in Sydney to attend the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit 2018, had also held a bilateral meeting with his Australian counterpart Malcolm Turnbull Saturday morning.

"I have just met with Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, during which several bilateral issues were discussed, and we both have taken note that Malaysia-Australia bilateral trade had increased by 23.7 per cent to almost RM54 billion in 2017.

"So as the investment between Australia and Malaysia. In fact, Malaysia's investment to Australia is bigger than from Australia to Malaysia and this includes Petronas' LNG plant worth US\$ 5 billion," he said in his Facebook Live broadcast today.

Apart from that, Najib said the existing cooperation in education sector between the two countries remained important as approximately 26,000 Malaysian students were pursuing their education in Australia.

Najib said Australia had also become a popular destination among Malaysian tourists with about 300,000 Malaysians visited the country last year.

"There are also places and restaurants owned by Malaysians here (in Australia) and this proved the close people-to-people ties between Malaysia and Australia," he said.

Najib's meeting with Turnbull, which lasted 30 minutes, took place at the Sydney International Convention Centre (ICC) ahead of the two day ASEAN-Australia Special Summit 2018 beginning this afternoon.

Najib said the special summit, which is the first in its series, indicated that as an organisation and as a region, ASEAN was getting more and more recognition from non-member countries.

"I will be given the honour to represent ASEAN at the closing segment of the conference on the prevention of crime between ASEAN and Australia.

"I'm confident and strongly believe that the special summit and my visit and discussions with Australian leaders will enhance the Malaysia-Australia and ASEAN-Australia bilateral relations," he said.

Najib is the only ASEAN leader invited to deliver a speech at the closing segment of the conference. The other leader to address the conference will be Turnbull.

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