

**KL, Jakarta fail to resolve maid dispute**  
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Prime Minister Najib Razak said today that officials had failed to settle a row over working conditions for Indonesian maids after Jakarta banned the flow of such migrants.

He said the two sides still had to agree on a minimum wage after he held talks with Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono that included improving the often harsh plight of Indonesian maids.

A string of maid abuse cases in Malaysia have strained relations and prompted Jakarta to temporarily ban maids from taking up jobs in Malaysia since June last year.

Earlier the two countries inked an agreement that would give maids one day off a week and ensure they can hang on to their passports while in service.

But agreement on the issue of a minimum wage has yet to be sealed.

"We have yet to decide on the question of minimum wage and this will continue to be discussed by the two countries," Najib told a news conference, adding however that he was optimistic agreement would be reached soon.

**Maid abuse cases**

Malaysian officials said last year that an average of 50 maid abuse cases were reported annually out of 300,000 Indonesian maids working in the country.

But Indonesia says 1,000 maids experience violence and mistreatment annually.

Malaysia - one of Asia's largest importers of labour - depends heavily on domestic workers, who come mainly from Indonesia, but has no laws governing their working conditions.

Malaysia's government announced plans last May for new laws to protect domestic workers from sexual harassment, non-payment of wages and poor working conditions.

Yudhoyono will attend the World Islamic Economic Forum in Kuala Lumpur on Wednesday.

- AFP