



**Najib conferred award by Saudi king  
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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak was conferred the King Abdul Aziz Order of Merit (First Class), Saudi Arabia's highest honour, by King Abdullah Abdulaziz Al-Saud in Riyadh last night.

The event took place at the Conference Palace where Najib had an audience with the Saudi king in conjunction with his official visit to Saudi Arabia.

"I would like to express my deepest gratitude to His Majesty for the award. I consider this as a manifestation of the close relations enjoyed between Saudi Arabia and Malaysia," Najib told reporters before departing for Abu Dhabi to begin an official visit to the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

According to him, it also signified vast potential for cooperation that could be forged between the two Islamic nations, not only for their common benefit but also for the larger Muslim community.

Najib's wife Rosmah Mansor, was present at the award presentation ceremony.

Others who had received the award in the past include President Barack Obama of the United States.

On what transpired during his talks with King Abdullah, Najib said he thanked the Saudi government for having given ample opportunities for Malaysian firms to take part in Saudi Arabia's economic development.

"We also appreciate that some parties in Saudi Arabia are keen to invest in Malaysia, like PetroSaudi International Ltd which has established a joint venture with 1Malaysia Development Bhd," he said.

Najib said Malaysian entities with large funds could well consider venturing out to Saudi Arabia and take part, for example, in the redevelopment of the holy city of Mecca.

Besides construction, project management and information technology were other areas where Malaysian companies could excel, he said.

### **Malaysian pilgrims the best**

Najib mentioned that the conduct of Malaysian Haj pilgrims over the years had impressed King Abdullah.

"His Majesty feels that Malaysian pilgrims are the best lot of them all. He said he couldn't recall ever coming across problems involving Malaysian pilgrims," he said.

On King Abdullah's initiative for promoting inter-faith dialogue, Najib said Malaysia too was keen on forging greater understanding among people of many different faiths and beliefs.

Najib and the Saudi king also discussed developments in Afghanistan and terrorism.

"There is a need for our two countries to seek greater cooperation to deal with the threat of terrorism in all its forms," Najib said, adding that a formal pact on this may be on the cards.

Najib also held talks with Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal.

Meanwhile, Rosmah took the opportunity to visit the Al Faisal University in the Saudi capital and spent some time at the King Faisal Foundation, said to be one of the largest philanthropic foundations in the world.

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