

# RM25b hi-tech city in Medina

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## MDeC to help Saudis develop the area

**MEDINA:** Malaysia will help Saudi Arabia build a RM25bil high-tech knowledge-economic city here.

"This is going to be a landmark not only for Saudi Arabia but also for the Muslim world," said Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

"It shows two Muslim countries can co-operate and collaborate in the interest of the *ummah* (Muslim community) and can indeed transform the Muslim world," he said here on Monday.

He had earlier witnessed the signing of a memorandum of understanding between Malaysia's Multimedia Development Corporation (MDeC) and Saudi's Seera City Real Estate Development Corporation to

build the Medina Knowledge Economic City (KEC).

Najib said it was only fitting that Medina – the holy city that marked the beginning of the Islamic acquisition of knowledge – was chosen to transform the Muslims and to bring about a true revival.

"This will not only transform Medina but elevate its standing in the eyes of the world," added the Deputy Prime Minister.

Najib said he was proud that Malaysia had been chosen as Saudi Arabia's partner for the KEC, which is patterned after Malaysia's own Multimedia Super Corridor and Cyberjaya.

"We are willing to share our experiences and all our expertise. We

have built the MSC and Cyberjaya and we will share the experience gained to make this project a real success," he said.

He also suggested that Saudi Arabia and Malaysia embark on twinning programmes between the MSC and the KEC, adding that MDeC has the framework to bring in the Malaysian companies. MDeC is one-stop agency established to facilitate the development and promotion of the MSC.

Seera City managing director Dr Sami Baroum said they were already in talks with a number of Malaysian companies.

"The project is huge and can absorb as many joint ventures as possible," he added.

Physical work on the project will

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DATUK SERI NAJIB TUN RAZAK

start in August and the first phase is expected to be completed in three-and-a-half years, he said.

That phase, he said, would include educational and health segments, hospitals, a hospitality complex, museum and some residential and retail shops.

Dr Sami said Medina, because of its holy status, was exclusively for Muslims and, hence, the projects would go to companies from the Muslim world.

"Malaysia is on top of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) in terms of technology and capability and experience," he added.

KEC will be ready in 12 to 15 years. Spread over 4.8 million sq metres, there will be, among others, technology and knowledge complexes, an interactive museum, a business centre and Islamic civilisation studies, technology and administrative centres.