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PM: I did not hold meeting with Israeli prime minister

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KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak has denied claims that he held a meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, after a photograph of the two together was circulated on social media.

Posting on his Facebook account, Najib said the photo was taken at the United Nations headquarters, where the two leaders had addressed the global organisation's 70th General Assembly last Thursday.

"I understand there is a picture of me with the Israel PM that was circulated on social media, as if I had arranged a meeting with him.

"Before that, (Netanyahu) had given his speech at the UN General Assembly, my turn was after his, and we bumped into each other while waiting for our cars. No one arranged our meeting. Stop this lie!" Najib said yesterday.

The picture, taken by an Israeli press office photographer, went viral just as Najib prepared to wrap up his

two-week working trip abroad.

In addition to the UN General Assembly in New York, he had also been in London, the United Kingdom, and Milan, Italy, before returning to Malaysia yesterday morning.

In a separate Facebook posting, Najib said the next order of business upon his return would be the 2016 Budget.

"*Alhamdulillah*, just arrived at (Kuala Lumpur International Airport). I was abroad for two weeks on official business. My next focus will be #Bajet2016," he wrote.

This year's budget, the first under the 11th Malaysia Plan, will be tabled on Oct 23.

Najib said the three key topics identified in a survey on the budget were cost of living, housing and urban living, and education.

"The government welcomes the feedback and will give due consideration and priority to these categories in the next budget," he said in his blog last night.