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PRIME NEWS

PM's Riyadh visit a boost for bilateral relations

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SOLIDARITY: Very positive outcome from meeting with King Salman, says Najib



RIYADH

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak concluded a four-day working trip to Saudi Arabia on Thursday and, by all accounts, it was a fruitful visit.

The highlight of the trip was the declaration by King Salman Abdulaziz Al-Saud that the relationship between Saudi Arabia and Malaysia was at its highest level.

On Wednesday, Najib was granted an audience with King Salman at his palace, when the king hosted a luncheon attended by family members, ministers and the army top brass.

Their presence signalled a good relationship between the two countries.

King Salman said he was impressed with what Malaysia had achieved, prompting Najib to describe the relationship between the two nations as "special".

After the meeting, Najib said he

had extended an invitation, on behalf of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, for King Salman to visit Malaysia.

Najib also visited Malaysian troops who took part in the Northern Thunder exercise, where they gained experience in conducting operations in the desert, another feather in the cap for our soldiers, who are already well trained in jungle warfare.

The exercise, led by Saudi Arabia, included troops from 18 other Muslim countries.

As Najib put it, our soldiers were in high spirits during his visit, which was also attended by Defence Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein and Armed Forces chief General Tan Sri Zulkifl Mohd Zin.

"The exercise is a show of solidarity by participating countries and a platform to strengthen solidarity in the Muslim world," he told Malaysian journalists on Wednesday night.

Najib said there was a very positive outcome from his meeting with



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak and King Salman Abdulaziz Al-Saud (left) in Riyadh on Wednesday. Bernama pic

King Salman and two telephone calls to Deputy Crown Prince Mohammad Salman Al-Saud, who took the time to engage with the prime minister despite not being in the country.

On Tuesday, the prime minister delivered a keynote address at the Jeddah Economic Forum on public-private partnership, where he spoke to participants about Malaysian ex-

perience in several fields.

Najib cited Malaysia's experience in the implementation of its privatisation policy in 1983, followed by the introduction of public-private partnerships and private finance initiatives in 2006.

A few hours before that, he and his wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, performed the umrah in Mecca.

Najib also hosted a dinner for 200

Malaysians working or studying here.

He urged them to correct perceptions of Malaysia and to promote the country, reminding them that they were representing the country in Saudi Arabia.

Najib said he was proud that many Malaysians were paid on a par with those from developed countries, especially nurses.