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# PM: Saudis respect Malaysia

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'Bilateral ties have reached highest levels'

**RAHIMY RAHIM**  
in Riyadh



**RIYADH:** Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak received a warm welcome during his audience with King Salman Abdul Aziz Al-Saud.

Najib said he was pleasantly surprised when Saudi royal family members, cabinet ministers and army top brass attended the luncheon banquet in honour of him and his entourage, on the invitation of the King.

"The ties between Malaysia and Saudi Arabia have reached its highest levels," Najib said, adding that the warm welcome showed that the Saudi government has the utmost respect for Malaysia.

He was speaking at a gathering with the Malaysian community in Saudi on Wednesday night.



**Strengthening ties:** Najib discussing various issues with King Salman in Saudi Arabia. — Bernama

He said the meeting had also put Malaysia in a special position with the Saudi government and that this could signal the level of importance attached by the Saudis to the ties between the two countries.

"With this development, it will be much easier for us to translate our close relationship, among others, into getting more preferential treatment and benefits, including visa

applications for umrah or the haj." He said that due to the challenging global uncertainties, Malaysia must continue to find other investment opportunities overseas.

"For us to increase our revenues, we need to strengthen our bilateral relations, and one of these is through our strategic partner Saudi Arabia."

Later at a press conference, Najib said King Salman, who is Custodian

of the Two Holy Mosques, told him that he shared his sentiments on the stronger ties between both countries.

His Majesty was also happy with the strong bilateral relations that both countries have, Najib said.

Najib also expressed his appreciation to the Saudi government for its special treatment towards Malaysian pilgrims performing the umrah and haj.