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This morning, Friday June 7, 2002, the Prime Minister of Malaysia, His Excellency Dr. Dato' Seri Mahathir bin Mohamad, was received in audience by His Holiness Pope John Paul II. He then held meetings with His Eminence Angelo Sodano, Secretary of State and His Excellency Jean-Louis Tauran, Secretary for the Holy See's Relations with States.

During the course of the conversations, the present state of Church-State relations in Malaysia was discussed, as well as the mutual cooperation for the promotion of dialogue between culture and religions, with a particular consideration of the cultural links between Islam and Christianity.

Also, there was an exchange of opinions on current international questions, particularly those regarding Southeast Asia and the Middle East.

The meetings which took place today mark the first time in history that a Prime Minister of Malaysia met with the Holy Father and the highest officials of the Holy See.

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