

Anwar to undertake 2-day working visit to Russia

Malaysiakini

03 September 2024

Bernama

Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim will undertake a two-day working visit to Russia beginning Wednesday to attend the 9th Eastern Economic Forum (EEF) in Vladivostok, the largest seaport city in Russia's far east region.

Anwar will also address the plenary session of the EEF on Sept 5.

Malaysian Ambassador to Russia Cheong Loon Lai said this is Anwar's first visit to Russia since assuming office in November 2022.

Cheong said the highlight of the visit would be the bilateral meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, during which Anwar is expected to reiterate Malaysia's interest in joining the Brics organisation. Russia is currently Brics' chair.

"Taking into consideration that Malaysia will take over the Asean chair next year, of course, this visit will also serve as a platform to promote and reiterate Malaysia's interest in joining Brics.

“The visit is at the invitation of President Putin, which was conveyed by Russian Foreign Minister (Sergey Lavrov),” he told Malaysian reporters today ahead of Anwar’s arrival on Wednesday morning.

Cheong said Anwar’s bilateral meeting with Putin would provide an opportunity for both leaders to take stock and discuss bilateral relations.

This includes trade and investment, higher education, technical and vocational education and training (TVET), agriculture and food security as well as tourism, and exploring collaboration in new areas such as aerospace and advanced technologies.

“They are also expected to exchange perspectives on the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the situation in the Middle East, and to discuss cooperation within the context of the Asean-Russia Dialogue Partnership,” he said.

During the visit, Anwar is also expected to meet with Deputy Mufti Rushan Hazrat Abbyasov, who is the first deputy chairperson of Russia Muftis Council and Religious Board of Muslim, and receive a courtesy call from Rais (Head) of Tatarstan, Rustam Minnikhanov.

He said the prime minister is also scheduled to go on a walkabout at the Far East Street exhibition pavilions, whereby he is likely to interact with the local

exhibitors.

The Far East Street exhibition is one of the highlights of the EEF. It traditionally attracts a large number of guests from among the forum participants, as well as from locals and people visiting Vladivostok.

The EEF is an annual economic forum held in Russia's Far East region since 2015 to promote investment and economic development as well as international cooperation in the region.

Themed “Combining Strength to Create New Potential”, the plenary session of the 9th EEF will be attended by high-level foreign and local dignitaries, policymakers, academics and captains of industries.

Enhancing bilateral ties

Meanwhile, a statement issued by the Foreign Affairs Ministry today stated that Anwar will be accompanied by Foreign Minister Mohamad Hasan; Investment, Trade and Industry Minister Tengku Zafrul Tengku Aziz; Selangor Menteri Besar Amirudin Shari; Deputy Economy Minister Hanifah Hajar Taib; Deputy Agriculture and Food Security Minister Arthur Joseph Kurup and senior government officials.

The statement said Anwar's visit to Russia underscores the strong relations between Malaysia and the republic and provides an opportunity for both nations to enhance bilateral cooperation for mutual benefit, especially in trade and investment.

In 2023, Russia was Malaysia's 8th largest trading partner among European countries, with total bilateral trade increased 15.6 percent year-on-year (y-o-y) to RM14.22 billion (US\$3.1 billion), compared to RM12.3 billion (US\$2.79 billion) recorded in 2022.

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Source: <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/717991>