

DPM TO BOOST KL-BANGKOK RELATIONS

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Wan Azizah to build rapport with Thai leadership in first official visit



**NURADZIMMAH
DAIM**

BANGKOK

DEPUTY Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail will begin her two-day official visit to Bangkok today.

This is her first official visit to

the country after being appointed to the cabinet on May 21 following Pakatan Harapan's victory in the 14th General Election.

Malaysian Ambassador to Thailand Datuk Jojie Samuel said Dr Wan Azizah, who is also women, family and community development minister, would be accompanied by Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Minister Datuk Salahuddin Ayub, Deputy Foreign Minister Senator Datuk Marzuki Yahya and officials from the International Trade and Industry Ministry, Foreign Ministry, Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation and the Malaysian embassy in Thailand.

He said the visit was part of efforts to improve and strengthen bilateral ties and cooperation between the countries through a series of visits by, among others, Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Foreign Minister Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah.

"Apart from building a personal rapport with Thailand's top leadership, the visit will give an opportunity to the deputy prime minister to boost business networking and investments between the countries."

He said Thailand remained Malaysia's fifth biggest trade partner after China, Singapore, the United States and Japan. More than 60 per cent of the US\$13.07 billion (RM15.04 billion) Malaysia-Thailand trade between January and September

last year comprised border trade in consumer goods, manufactured goods and raw materials through nine Malaysia-Thailand entry points.

Samuel, who was speaking to reporters at the Malaysian embassy here, said Dr Wan Azizah and her counterpart would discuss development and progress on bilateral issues and cooperation agreed upon by the prime ministers of both countries last year. The visit, he said, would explore partnerships in fields that would benefit economy and trade between Malaysia and Thailand.

The visit will also see Dr Wan Azizah express support for the Thai government on its Asean chairmanship and exchange views based on its theme, "Advancing Partnership for Sustainability".

On the first day, Dr Wan Azizah will pay a courtesy call on Thai Prime Minister General Prayuth Chan o cha at the Government House, attend a bilateral meeting with her counterpart, General Chatchai Sarikulya, visit the Thai Red Cross Children's Home here and attend a dinner hosted by Chatchai.

On the second day, she will officiate the virtual launch of 7 MLD Reclamation Water Treatment Plant, a joint-venture project between Ranhill (Malaysia) and Amata Water Company Limited (Thailand) at the Amata City Industrial Estate in Rayong.

Her itinerary includes a business roundtable meeting with Thai industry leaders and a meet-and-greet session with the Malaysian diaspora in Thailand.