

# Malaysia, Indonesia ties strengthening

**RELATIONS** between Malaysia and Indonesia have seen ups and downs over the years.

Last year, things deteriorated due to the case of an Indonesian domestic worker who was abused by her employer here, leading to hospitalisation.

Shortly after, the Indonesian embassy released a list of Malaysians who have been blacklisted from entering Indonesia due to the mistreatment of Indonesian workers.

Observers were alarmed by this development as it indicated a deteriorating relationship.

However, we should be feeling better as Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's visit last month to Indonesia seemed to have turned things around.

During the visit, Anwar stated that he sympathised with and felt sorry for Indonesian workers who were treated badly in Malaysia.

Both countries then signed a memorandum of understanding on the recruitment and protection of Indonesia domestic helpers in Malaysia, as well as several other memoranda.

After the visit, many activities between the two countries are once again on the up, with Anwar saying his two-day visit at the invitation of President Joko Widodo had met its objectives.

Recently, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof also went to Indonesia to discuss the palm oil issue with his counterpart.

Indonesia then said the chairmanship of the Council of Palm Oil Producing Countries will go to Malaysia for 2023.

Fadillah said he hoped that both countries could embark on a joint mis-



*Malaysia-Indonesia relations have improved after Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's visit to Indonesia. FILE PIC*

sion to address the European Union's policies targeting palm oil producing countries.

Indonesian Trade Minister Dr Zulkifli Hasan told Fadillah that the Border Trade Agreement and Border Crossing Agreement would be concluded soon.

This is beneficial to Malaysia, especially for Sabah and Sarawak, as the agreement can facilitate cross-border trade and, more importantly, allow additional labour into the country.

We are also grateful for Indonesia's help in evacuating two Malaysians from Turkiye after the country was

hit by strong earthquakes.

The new positive momentum will surely strengthen the bilateral relationship and contribute to better cooperation this year and beyond.

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