

Mutual benefits to be gained

KL, Manila committed to building operations in varied sectors

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PUTRAJAYA: Malaysia and the Philippines are committed to coordinating capacity-building efforts in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, focusing on the halal industry, Islamic banking and food security sectors.

This was among the outcomes of a meeting between Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr where both leaders attested to the strong relations between the two nations, which will celebrate 60 years of diplomatic ties next year.

Marcos said that Malaysia had offered expertise to train Philippine personnel and strengthen their capabilities in these increasingly important sectors.

"Once again, I made an expression of gratitude to the King as well as to the Prime Minister for all the help that we have received from Malaysia in the southern Philippines. It has been an important part of whatever success we might enjoy today.

"That has been a foothold for us to use to continue to develop and promote relations between the two countries," he told the media after a meeting with Anwar at the Prime Minister's Office yesterday.

Malaysia had served as a medi-



Friendly reception: Marcos Jr (left) signing the guest book as Anwar looks on.
— Bernama

ator in the negotiations between the Philippine government and Muslim rebels of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

The talks eventually culminated in the formation of the Bangsamoro autonomous region in 2019.

During his visit to Manila in March, Anwar said it was Malaysia's duty as a good neighbour to support peace process efforts.

He said Malaysia and the Philippines' partnership is set to expand, particularly in the halal industry.

"We are keen to take effective measures to penetrate international markets, particularly the Middle East market," he said.

On Malaysia's part, he said it

would help the Philippines with halal certification.

Marcos said with Malaysia being one of the leading halal economies in the world, cooperation in this sector would mutually benefit the growth of their respective halal ecosystems.

Anwar said potential collaboration in areas of bilateral relations and economic cooperation must be fully explored to resuscitate Malaysia's and the Philippines' economies post-Covid-19 pandemic.

"We take note of the fact that there has been phenomenal progress in the Philippines under your (Marcos) leadership. We should certainly use this experience to boost cooperation.

"By expanding partnerships

and boosting trade relations, it will bring tremendous benefit to the people," he said.

The Prime Minister said Malaysia has offered to host the eighth Malaysia-Philippines Joint Commission Meeting and hoped that both countries would be able to sign several bilateral instruments to further elevate bilateral cooperation during the meeting.

Marcos said the joint commission meeting provides agencies of both governments with an avenue to discuss priority cooperation, especially on transnational crimes, agriculture, the halal industry, Islamic banking and the digital economy.

"As I mark my second year as President of the Philippines, this state visit not only attests to the importance we place on Malaysia as a neighbour and as a partner in Asean.

"It also reaffirms the Philippines' commitment to further cultivating our bond and friendship, especially as we look forward to celebrating our 60th anniversary of formal diplomatic relations with Malaysia next year," he said.