



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim holding a press conference in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on Friday before leaving for home. With him are Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir (left) and Communications and Digital Minister Fahmi Fadzil. **BERNAMA PIC**

'Malaysia keen to reopen King Salman Centre'

JEDDAH: Malaysia is addressing the repercussions of hastily made decisions by past administrations to shut down initiatives in the country that were sponsored or backed by its global friends.

One of them is the Saudi-backed King Salman Centre for International Peace (KSCIP), which was closed down in 2018, just over a year after it was launched by King Salman Abdulaziz Al Saud during a visit to the country in March 2017.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said the government could not defend such arbitrary closures, which was not even brought up for discussion.

"It is of great concern to me, the way these closures and cancellations were done. Any government has the right to decide... but when it involves close partners, there must be at least prior discussions. This was not done.

I have expressed to Saudi Arabia and their representatives in the past, that we are open to talks on the suitable structure and parameters, if Riyadh wants to revisit this," he said when asked if the Saudi government was offended by Kuala Lumpur's decision then to cancel the initiative without explanation.

Anwar said Malaysia remained cordial in its relations with all Muslims blocs across the globe.

The decision by the then-government to shut down the centre had drawn flak from the kingdom, with feedback that it would impact Malaysia amid the threat of growing extremism and terrorism in the Muslim world, including the Islamic State group.

Its establishment would have put Malaysia, along with Saudi Arabia, at the forefront of the fight against radicalism and violent extremism.