



PKR president Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim delivering his winding-up speech at the party's national congress at the Putrajaya International Convention Centre yesterday. PIC BY MOHD FADLI HAMZAH

BOOSTING TOURISM

PM ANNOUNCES 30-DAY VISA-FREE TRAVEL

Facility extended to gulf nations, Turkiye, Jordan, China and India

HANA NAZ HARUN AND SHAHRIN AIZAT NOORSHAHRIZAM
PUTRAJAYA
news@nst.com.my

TRAVELLERS from certain Middle Eastern countries, Turkiye, Jordan, China and India can

enjoy 30-day visa-free travel to Malaysia starting Dec 1, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

In his winding-up speech at the PKR national congress, he said this was to increase the tourism potential from those countries.

"We are extending the visa-free facility to gulf countries, such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Kuwait, Iraq, Iran, as well as West Asian countries like Turkiye and Jordan, starting Dec 1 for 30 days.

"Also, because we are celebrating 50 years of diplomatic relations with China, we will also give the same visa-free exemption for travellers from China and India," he said.

"This exemption is subject to security screening, which will be done for all visitors coming to the country.

"Those with criminal records or pose risks of violence will not be allowed to enter."

Details of this facility, he added, would be announced by Home Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail soon.

Anwar, who is PKR president, said China had allowed visa-free travel for Malaysians entering the country for 15 days.

Malaysia, he added, was the only Asian country that China accorded this benefit to, apart from three other European countries.

He said the highest number of tourists into Malaysia in the Asean region were from Singapore and Indonesia, but the highest outside of the region was from China.

"The tourism potential from China is huge, just like how many South Koreans are travelling to Kota Kinabalu now."

Meanwhile, in a firm rebuke to federal lawmakers who have directed insults at the government, Anwar declared that funds would be allocated for constituencies under the opposition, but these would be funnelled straight to the people instead.

He said the government would continue its commitment to channel allocations as he had been doing so since helming Putrajaya.

"We have increased the allocations for parliamentary constituencies, as I have mentioned in Parliament. Allocations for Pas and (Parti Pribumi) Bersatu (Malaysia)-held constituencies, we have continued.

"Schools, mosques and housing infrastructure, we have done everything.

"We did not channel those

funds through the lawmakers (but) straight to the people.

"Why do we need to channel (the funds) through those members of parliament who have been hurling insults at us every day, trying to topple us?"

Anwar said he would go to Sadao in southern Thailand today to meet Thai Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin.

He said the two leaders would discuss development in the northern states of the peninsula and the four southern provinces of Thailand to ensure better economic growth, peace and stability in the region.

"Tomorrow (today), I will be at the border of Sadao and Bukit Kayu Hitam with the Thai prime minister, where our approach will be to ensure better two-way movement so that we can encourage more tourism between our two countries."

Anwar slammed claims that his international trips as prime minister had been a waste of time and money.

He said in the Asean context, he had wanted better relations with Singapore, especially in terms of issues regarding water, airspace and border control.

"In several meetings, with the prime minister of Singapore (Lee Hsien Loong), I had said that the unity government was taking a positive attitude (to relations with Singapore).

"I received his admittance that all these issues... need political determination to be solved and for it to mutually benefit our countries."