

Malaysia to seek Dutch expertise in flood mitigation

PUTRAJAYA: Expertise from the Netherlands will be sought not just to improve the country's flood mitigation systems but also to reduce flood management expenditure, says Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He said the expert assistance from the Netherlands could reduce Malaysia's flood management expenditure, which runs into billions of ringgit every year.

"I explained to Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte the need to improve the capacity of rivers to tackle the floods we face every year. I also explained to him that, of late, our expenditure on floods has hit RM15bil.

"Rutte said, with expertise and new technology, maybe the cost need not be as high," he told reporters after receiving a courtesy call from Rutte at Seri Perdana yesterday. Anwar added that Rutte gave an assurance to speed up the dispatch of expertise to Malaysia.

He also said that Malaysia had agreed to conduct excavation and recovery works for old sunken ships, including Dutch-owned vessels, in the country's territorial waters based on set conditions.



Discussing pressing issues: Anwar receiving a courtesy call from Rutte at Seri Perdana, Putrajaya. Rutte is in town for a two-day working visit, his second time in Malaysia after his maiden trip here in 2014. - Bernama

"Although in Malaysian waters, they are Dutch ships. We can step up cooperation based on stipulated conditions, as was done before," he added.

Anwar also said Malaysia and the Netherlands had agreed to strengthen the semiconductor industry as well as the digital and artificial intelligence fields involv-

ing the two countries.

"We can cooperate with the Netherlands to tap into their experience in the aspect of direct government participation in promoting and intensifying efforts in the semiconductor industry. They can use our experience on industry participation, especially the private sector, in this field,"

Anwar said, Bernama reported.

In 2022, the Netherlands was Malaysia's 14th largest trading partner and second biggest in the European Union (EU), with trade totalling RM48.04bil, a 33.4% increase over the RM36.01bil in 2021. The Netherlands is also the biggest importer of Malaysian palm oil among EU countries,

with a total volume of 732,324.54 tonnes.

Anwar also said the Netherlands respects Malaysia's stance on Palestine and agreed there should be an immediate ceasefire to stop the Israeli attacks on Palestine.

"Firstly, he (Rutte) agreed that there should be an immediate ceasefire to stop the attacks. He told me to give him time to contact the Israeli leader and also through Qatar, so that there could be negotiations to stop the attacks.

"Secondly, he agreed that there should be additional measures that he could take up with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi," he added.

Anwar praised his Dutch counterpart for taking a soft approach to listening and sharing his views on Palestine and has assured Malaysia that her views would be brought to the attention of other European leaders.