

M'sia-Russia trade on the agenda

Anwar set to discuss economic cooperation with Putin in Vladivostok

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PETALING JAYA: Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim is set to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin to discuss economic cooperation in the coming weeks.

The Prime Minister revealed that he would be meeting Putin in Vladivostok at the latter's invitation.

"We will discuss economic cooperation and also position Malaysia as among the countries that defend its neutral stance and not to be enemies with anyone.

"Our principles are to constantly defend freedom, reject oppression nor allow any quarters or countries to oppress, insult or murder innocents," he said in his speech when launching the GXBank headquarters and Centre of Excellence here yesterday.

Anwar said Malaysia will continue to employ an open trade policy as long as it benefits the country and spurs growth.

"Any framework that allows us to trade with all countries while defending our peace and economic interests, we will be open to it," he said.



Official opening:

Anwar launching the GXBank headquarters in Petaling Jaya. With him are (from left) Tan, Tengku Zafrul, Zaiton and Gobind.
- AZHAR MAHFOF/The Star

On July 28, Anwar said Malaysia had submitted an application to Russia to join the BRICS inter-governmental organisation.

In a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office, Anwar said Malaysia's desire to join BRICS was the main topic of his discussion with visiting Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov at the Seri Perdana Complex in Putrajaya.

Originally comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, the BRICS group welcomed Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates as new members during the bloc's summit in August last year.

It was established in 2009 as a cooperation platform for rapidly developing economies.

BRICS now contributes to a quarter of the global economy,

accounts for one-fifth of global trade and represents about 40% of the world's population.

On the conflict in Palestine, Anwar stressed Malaysia's firm stance on the issue from a humanitarian standpoint.

"There's no point talking about independence and humanity when you are blinded by the gross atrocities inflicted on innocent people, women and children

regardless if the victims are Muslims, Christians, Hindus or Buddhists," he said.

"That is the position Malaysia takes and we will adhere to that strongly without compromise."

In his speech, Anwar also stressed the importance of digital exposure in the current era and urged GXBank to include programmes for those from urban and rural poor communities.

"The Centre of Excellence here caters for professionals but there should also be a component giving opportunities to not only the best but also marginalised youths.

"This way, the bank will have a truly inclusive and innovative policy while also displaying compassion," said Anwar.

Also present at the event were Investment, Trade and Industry Minister Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz, Digital Minister Gobind Singh Deo, GXBank chairperson Datuk Zaiton Mohd Hassan, Grab co-founder and chairman Anthony Tan, GXBank chief executive officer Lai Pei-Si as well as GXBank board of directors and shareholders and Grab Malaysia senior management.