

Anwar, Lee witness historic RTS Link connection

JOHOR BAHRU: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and his Singapore counterpart Lee Hsien Loong witnessed the historic moment when the Rapid Transit System Link (RTS Link) between Malaysia and Singapore was symbolically connected.

The connection involved the completion of the span, which is the meeting point of the project's marine viaduct between Johor Bahru and Singapore.

This is the first time the two leaders met on the project site, thus strengthening the commitment of both countries to the multi-billion ringgit project.

During the event, Anwar and Lee signed a plaque, reflecting the commitment of both countries to the construction of the project, which had reached a scheduled progress level of 65% as of Dec 31.

Present were Transport Minister Anthony Loke and Singapore Acting Transport Minister Chee Hong Tat as well as Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Onn Hafiz Ghazi.

> Both leaders sign plaque, reflecting commitment to multi-billion ringgit project that has reached 65% completion as of Dec 31

The RTS Link project is a commuter train system about four kilometres long with two stations, one at Bukit Chagar here and the other at Woodlands North, in the republic.

The railway line, scheduled for completion in December 2026, will afford a fast and comfortable journey between Singapore and Johor Bahru. With a capacity of up to 10,000 passengers per hour in each direction, the rail service will offer a journey time of about five minutes between the two stations,

Meanwhile, an MoU was signed by Economy Minister Rafizi Ramli and Singapore Trade and Industry Minister Gan Kim Yong for a proposed Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone, witnessed by

Anwar and Lee.

The economic zone will further boost trade between Johor and Singapore and is expected to flourish like the Chinese city of Shenzhen, a success story of a special economic zone.

The zone, adjacent to the Singapore border, is expected to foster stronger business connections and improve connectivity between the two countries, as the Southeast Asian region strives to counter a global economic slowdown.

It is also projected to improve the business ecosystems of the Iskandar Malaysia region and Singapore.

Among the sectors the zone is targeting are electronics, financial

services, business-related services and healthcare, Bernama reported.

Last year, Johor secured RM70.6 billion worth of foreign investments in various sectors.

Singapore is the state's second-largest foreign investor, contributing to about 70% of Johor's total foreign direct investment in the manufacturing sector.

At a media conference held in conjunction with the event, Loke said the RTS project and the special economic zone are expected to open a new chapter in bilateral relations between both nations.

He said the government also welcomes proposals from the private sector for alternative transport links to connect Malaysia and Singapore to further improve connectivity.

"It involves many things, not just the mode of transport, but the necessary infrastructure and facilities, such as a customs, immigration and quarantine complex."