

SINGAPORE MAY SEND TEACHERS TO MALAYSIA

Anwar, Singapore PM also discuss possible revival of KL-Singapore HSR project

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SINGAPOREAN teachers may come to Malaysia to teach English and other subjects.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said he discussed this with his Singaporean counterpart, Lawrence Wong, in a bilateral meeting yesterday.

Currently, Johor and Singapore are working on a joint education project with a new curriculum that involves the exchange of programmes and teacher training.

“We did discuss the possibility of Singapore considering my humble solution to send teachers to teach English and other subjects to many regions in this country,” he said at a joint press conference with Wong, who is on his inaugural visit to Malaysia as Singapore prime minister after being sworn in on May 15.

Earlier, Anwar met Wong to discuss ways to strengthen bilateral relations between the countries.

The prime ministers also discussed the possible revival of the Kuala Lumpur-Singapore High-Speed Rail (HSR) project.

Wong said his government would keep an “open mind” to new ideas and proposals to revive the HSR.

“We hope to take stock of discussions between officials of both sides. And of course, along the way, there may be new ideas that open up. We are open to hearing from Malaysia if there are proposals for a HSR.

“If there are new ideas, we will keep an open mind, and discuss them in the right spirit of taking our relationship forward.”

In January, the *New Straits Times* reported that seven local and international consortia, comprising three firms, had submitted a request-for-information (RFI) concept proposal for the HSR project.

MyHSR launched the RFI in July last year as the Malaysian government explored reactivating the project to construct a 350km high-speed line, which was can-



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim speaking to his Singapore counterpart, Lawrence Wong, in Putrajaya yesterday. BERNAMA PIC

celled in 2021, under a public-private partnership model.

The government is expected to shortlist candidates in a few months and start full negotiations with the Singaporean government at the earliest later this year.

It was reported that the rail project, which would cut travel time between Kuala Lumpur and Singapore to 90 minutes, would include seven stations in Malaysia — Bandar Malaysia, Sepang-Putrajaya, Seremban, Melaka, Muar, Batu Pahat and Iskandar Puteri — and Jurong East in Singapore.

Last month, Transport Minister Anthony Loke said discussions about the proposed HSR with the Singaporean government would take place only after obtaining cabinet approval.

He had said the HSR proposal was still at the Transport Ministry level and that he had informed his Singaporean counterpart Chee Hong Tat that there were ongoing discussions.

Anwar said Malaysia and Singapore were waiting to finalise projects involving the Johor-Singapore financial and economic zones and the Johor-Singapore Rapid Transit System (RTS) link.

He said he and Wong discussed this in their hour-long meeting at Seri Perdana.

“Wong is quite concerned on how we will proceed with the RTS, and he also mentioned the economic zone. We are just waiting to finalise this.

“I would even drop in to Singapore to meet potential investors to encourage them, but we have to get the parameters and issues resolved.

“And from the initial briefing

by (Economy Minister) Rafizi Ramli and (International Trade and Industry Minister) Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz, it seems that we are very close to a final agreement.”

In response, Wong said he was excited for the potential of the economic zone and that Johor and Singapore had the key ingredients to make it successful.

“The projects we have, including the RTS, are major game-changers which can really tap on the complementarities between Malaysia, Johor and Singapore.

“People harp a lot on the competition between our two economies, but really, we are complementing one another, and the bigger competition is outside of Singapore and Malaysia and outside of the region.”

Wong said if both countries pressed forward with good master planning and clear and consistent policies around the special economic zone, it would unlock massive economic benefits for the two sides.

“What we are doing between Singapore and Malaysia, as well as Johor and Singapore, is in many ways what Asean ought to be doing to strengthen economic integration as one community.

“So I’m very hopeful that Malaysia and Singapore can provide a strong anchor for a stronger and more integrated Asean community.”

Page 1 pic: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and his Singaporean counterpart Lawrence Wong at a press conference in Putrajaya yesterday.