

PM: Malaysia, Australia to explore cooperation opportunities in three key areas

MELBOURNE: Malaysia and Australia are exploring cooperation opportunities in emerging sectors as both nations enter a new progressive era, with three main areas identified, namely economic prosperity, community and technology, as well as defence and security.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said to achieve these goals, he was prepared to work with Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese to elevate long-forged ties to a higher level.

Anwar said Malaysia and Australia, which will celebrate their 70th year of diplomatic ties next year, have already built a solid cooperation in various fields.

These ties, he said, were further strengthened by the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) in 2021, which provides an action plan to develop cooperation in various fields, including trade and investment, education, youth and sport, digital economy

as well as cyber security.

"Renewable energy, green technology and definitely digital. Food security is also important to us and has become a pressing need for many countries.

"So is education. There are many (Australian) institutes of higher education and national universities which have set up campuses in Malaysia, which we welcome. It is our job and commitment to facilitate and expedite the process," he said in a joint press conference with Albanese after the Malaysia-Australia Annual Leaders' Meeting (ALM) yesterday.

Anwar was earlier accorded an official welcome by Victoria Governor Margaret Gardener and Albanese at the Government House in Victoria.

This marked his maiden official visit as prime minister to Australia, where he is leading Malaysia's delegation to the ALM as well as the Asean-Australia

Special Summit.

Malaysia and Australia also formalised four memoranda of understanding (MoUs), two of which are new: Practical Arrangements between the Government of Malaysia and the Government of Australia on Cooperation in the Areas of Science and Technology and Their Applications for the Implementation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty; and Cyber Security and Critical Technology.

Two others are renewable MoUs, namely cooperation in sports and higher education.

Also in the Malaysian delegation were Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan, International Trade and Industry Minister Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz and Youth and Sports Minister Hannah Yeoh.

On economic prosperity, Anwar said he and Albanese agreed that there remains much to be

explored to boost trade between both nations despite the impressive bilateral trade numbers recorded in the last few years.

Australia is Malaysia's 10th largest trading partner.

"We agreed that both parties will prioritise efforts to renew and modernise Australia-Malaysia cooperation to ensure both countries are developed, safe and digitally resilient.

"The government welcomes the participation of Australian companies in manufacturing and developing industries in Malaysia, especially in renewable energy and agro-technology, as well as establish joint ventures to develop midstream and downstream businesses," he said.

Anwar said in the community and technology area, Malaysia and Australia affirmed their commitment to improve multi-sector cooperation to adapt to changing business needs.

"We expect that the MoU on

higher education and Technical and Vocational Education and Training will further boost research and high-technology-based cooperation between universities from both countries."

On defence, Anwar said both countries agreed to continue and improve cooperation under the Malaysia-Australia Joint Defence Programme, maritime cooperation, eradicating terrorism, transnational crime, as well as cyber security.

"We also discussed and exchanged views on numerous regional and international issues of joint concern, especially the Palestine-Israel crisis, on which Malaysia has a strong stand."

Meanwhile, on further strengthening ties between both nations, Anwar encouraged more exchange visits at all levels, from the public to private sector, to maintain the progressive momentum in the bilateral relations forged to date.