

# Kazakhstan to give M'sian companies mining opportunities

ASTANA: Kazakhstan has agreed for Malaysian companies to explore various opportunities in the country, including in the fields of mining and renewable energy, says Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He said Kazakhstan also wants to strengthen cooperation and share knowledge with Malaysia, because of the expertise and skills in chip manufacturing.

"Kazakhstan is an important country in Central Asia because of its economic strength, and it also wants to continue improving relations with Malaysia.

"They have given us a special opportunity and incentive because of the bilateral and diplomatic relations between the two countries which started in 1992," he said at a press conference at the end of a two-day official visit to Kazakhstan yesterday, Bernama reported.

The Prime Minister said the agreement was made during his meeting with the President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev at the Ak Orda Presidential Palace.

Anwar said both countries agreed to facilitate trade and investment process to attract investors and the business community to explore new cooperation opportunities.

"We also want to strengthen



**Welcome to Astana:** Anwar shaking hands with Tokayev during their meeting at the Presidential Palace in Astana. - AP

cooperation in sectors of interest such as halal, Islamic banking and agriculture," he added.

On the Kazakhstan-Malaysia Roundtable Investment Meeting, the Prime Minister said four memorandums of understanding were signed at the session, expected to generate exports of RM1.6bil.

Also in the Prime Minister's delegation were Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan,

Minister of Investment, Trade and Industry Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz, Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture Datuk Seri Tiong King Sing, and Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Religious Affairs) Datuk Dr Mohd Na'im Mokhtar.

Kazakhstan, the ninth largest country in the world, has a population of about 20 million people.

The country is bordered by

Russia to the north, the Caspian Sea to the southwest; Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and the Kyrgyz Republic to the south, and China to the east. Its main export is oil, followed by natural gas and other commodities.

Kazakhstan is also a major wheat producer.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister has arrived in Tashkent for his inaugural three-day official visit

to Uzbekistan, aimed at enhancing bilateral relations in various fields between the two countries.

The special aircraft carrying the Prime Minister from Kazakhstan landed at the Tashkent International Airport here at 2.15pm local time (5.15pm Malaysian time).

Anwar was greeted by Uzbekistan Prime Minister Abdulla Nigmatovich Aripov, Foreign Minister Bakhtiyor Saidov, Tashkent Mayor Shavkat Umrzakov, Uzbekistan Ambassador to Malaysia Karomidin Gadoev and Malaysian Ambassador to Uzbekistan Ilham Tuah Illias.

The visit, according to the Foreign Ministry, is at the invitation of Uzbekistan President Shavkat Mirziyoyev.

Uzbekistan is the last stop of Anwar's visit to three Central Asian countries.

The Prime Minister's itinerary in Uzbekistan includes a visit to the Imam Hazrati Complex, where the original manuscript of the Caliph Usman Quran (Mashaf Uthmani) - the oldest in the world - is kept and displayed, and to address the high-level Uzbekistan-Malaysian Business Forum held at the Silk Road Samarkand Tourism Complex.

Malaysia and Uzbekistan have enjoyed close relations since they established ties in 1992.