

'United with Malaysia in Palestinian stance

PM: Uzbekistan president also lauds country's fight against graft

TASHKENT: Uzbekistan has lauded Malaysia for its stand on the issue of Palestine, says Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Anwar said during his meeting with Uzbekistan President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, the latter had expressed his appreciation for Malaysia's firmness in fighting for justice for the Palestinian people.

"Malaysia and Uzbekistan share the stance of wanting to see the existence of a free and independent Palestinian state," the Prime Minister said in a statement, *Bernama* reported.

Mirziyoyev also welcomed the government's continuous commitment in the fight against corruption and abuse of power, said Anwar, who led the Malaysian delegation to a courtesy visit and bilateral meetings with Mirziyoyev yesterday.

"President Mirziyoyev and I share the same desire to strengthen Malaysia-Uzbekistan relations, especially in trade and investment, cooperation in education, energy, halal industry, agriculture, transport, digital technology, Islamic finance and banking," he said.

Anwar also extended an invitation to Mirziyoyev to visit Malaysia, especially to participate in the Global Forum of Islamic Economics and Finance in Kuala Lumpur on May 28.

"I deeply appreciate the discussions which took place in a friendly atmosphere. It turned out to have strengthened the close relationship between the two countries," he said.

The Prime Minister arrived on Friday for his inaugural three-day official visit to Uzbekistan. This is the last stop of Anwar's official visit to three Central

Asian countries.

He earlier visited the Kyrgyz Republic and Kazakhstan.

Anwar said Uzbekistan intends to work with the National Heart Institute (IJN) and the Islamic Development Department of Malaysia so that its halal standards reach the level implemented by Jakim.

"Uzbekistan also plan to send its agriculture minister to Malaysia to learn efficient water-saving methods and technologies for drainage and agriculture purposes in Uzbekistan," he said.

In a joint statement, Anwar and Mirziyoyev said that Malaysia and Uzbekistan were keen to exchange best practices, particularly in marketing tourism in both countries.

Taking into account that Malaysia is one of the leading countries in implementing the

concept of halal tourism, the leaders said there was a need for the introduction of tourism standards that compatible with Islamic values.

"The growing flow of two-way tourists was positively evaluated. The increasing air traffic between the capitals and establishing direct air flights from Malaysian major cities to the cities of Samarkand and Bukhara will boost relations between business circles and increase flow of tourists," the leaders said.

The statement said that Malaysia welcomes the existing regular flights to and from Uzbekistan and looked forward to becoming tourism hub for the Central Asian region to Malaysia as well as to Asean countries.

"The leaders discussed their concerns over the rising religious intolerance and Islamophobia which has been observed in some

countries recently.

"They agreed to widely promote the ideas of interreligious tolerance and harmony on a global scale," the statement added.

Both leaders also declared their joint commitment to intensify bilateral relations between the two countries, aimed at advancing cooperation across all domains.

Putrajaya and Tashkent have also agreed to organise joint educational programmes in Uzbekistan with Malaysia's leading universities to further cooperation in the field of education, noting that future implementation of joint projects should explore capacity-building programmes in areas such as economic diplomacy, Islamic finance and banking, technology, engineering, energy, chemical industry, ecology and climate change.



Captivating handiwork:

Anwar (right) at a shop when visiting the Imam Hazrati Complex in Tashkent.
— *Bernama*