

Anwar's trip yields positive results

Official visit to three Central Asian countries boosts bilateral trade and ties

TASHKENT: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's official visit to Uzbekistan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Kazakhstan from May 14 to 19 yielded positive results not only in terms of economic and other mutual cooperation, but also in terms of forging alliances and friendship.

During his recent visit to Central Asia, it could be seen that the Prime Minister emphasised on efforts to increase bilateral trade with a larger amount of Malaysian exports.

Anwar was accompanied by Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Mohamad Hassan; Investment, Trade and Industry Minister Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz; Tourism, Arts and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Tiong King Sing and Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Religious Affairs) Datuk Dr Mohd Na'im Mokhtar.

Apart from Mohamad, who is in charge of maintaining good diplomatic relations with other countries, and Tengku Zafrul, who oversees matters related to trade and investment, the two other ministers had their own



objectives during the visit.

Anwar also used the opportunity to visit several locations in Uzbekistan associated with Islamic history and civilisation, which are being promoted as tourist attractions.

On his final day in Uzbekistan on Sunday, the Prime Minister spent time at the city of Bukhara where he visited the Naqshbandi Sufi Complex, which includes the tomb of Baha-ud-Din Naqshband

Bukhari, the founder of the Naqshbandi order, who died in 1389, followed by a visit to the Ark of Bukhara, a massive fortress that was initially built and occupied around the 5th century AD, and the Kalon Minaret Complex.

Uzbekistan is Anwar's last stop on his official visit to the three Central Asian countries.

During the visit, the three countries expressed their aspirations to cooperate in developing the

halal industry in their respective countries, with Uzbekistan voicing its intention to cooperate with Jakim to ensure halal standards in their country reach the level implemented by the department.

In a Bernama report, the Prime Minister said he wanted Malaysia to be more aggressive in marketing halal products, which not only focuses on food and beverage products, but also the entire halal industry.

Special guest: Anwar enjoying a musical performance during a luncheon hosted by the Bukhara governor in Tashkent.
— Bernama

In terms of tourism, he also wanted to see an increase in the number of tourists from Central Asian countries to Malaysia.

The number of Uzbek tourists to Malaysia reached 25,000 last year, compared with only 10,000 the year before.

At the conclusion of his visit to Uzbekistan, Anwar told Malaysian media that countries such as China, Germany and the United States are big investors, and their investments would provide benefits such as job opportunities and centres of excellence for training.

He added that forging good cooperation with developing countries was vital as Malaysia needed staunch friends in order to avoid being pressured by any one power.

"Therefore, we have good relationships with all powers, but networks with developing countries such as Uzbekistan, will greatly assist us as they understand that we have the same approach and strategy," he said.

He added that all the ministers accompanying him on this trip had achieved their respective targets.