

A VERY MEANINGFUL VISIT, SAYS ANWAR

Malaysia, Pakistan PMs discuss various issues from economic zones to trade and markets

ISLAMABAD

MALAYSIAN Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and his Pakistani counterpart Shehbaz Sharif held a meeting covering bilateral issues at the Pakistan Prime Minister's official residence here yesterday.

Anwar, who arrived in Islamabad on Wednesday night for a three-day state visit, described his visit to the South Asian country as "very meaningful".

"This is a very meaningful visit to Pakistan.

"We (Malaysia and Pakistan delegation) discussed various issues concerning both countries from economic zones, issues of trade and markets and others," he said during the joint press conference with Sharif after the meeting.

Anwar said that as a result of the meeting, Malaysia in principle agreed to import 100,000

metric tonnes of halal meat from Pakistan as well as Basmati rice.

He expressed confidence that Pakistan's halal meat exporters would have no problem adhering to Malaysia's stringent halal regulations to maintain the quality of their halal meat products.

On the issue of Malaysia's need for skilled labour especially in the Information Technology, Artificial Intelligence and semiconductor sectors, Anwar said he is hopeful that Pakistan could become one of the countries that can supply skilled labour in these important sectors to Malaysia.

Malaysia, he said, also would like to see the country's airlines given more landing rights in Pakistan to facilitate the increased number of tourists, students, trade, commerce and others between the two countries.

He noted that the strong position the Pakistani government took in condemning the atrocities and genocide committed by Israel against Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, as well as Tel Aviv's intransigence, which escalated the already tense situation in the Middle East to breaking point.

Describing Malaysia as a brotherly country to Pakistan, the Pakistani prime minister in his remarks at the joint press confer-

ence said that the Southeast Asian nation's achievement in the economic sphere and progress is exemplary and must be a model to Muslim countries.

He said that he is hopeful that bilateral relations with Malaysia, which were established in 1957 when the latter gained its independence, could be elevated to a higher level.

"Malaysia's progress should be emulated by all Muslim countries, in terms of attracting foreign direct investment (FDI), becoming a hub for the semiconductor industry and others," he said.

Anwar and Sharif also witnessed the signing of three Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Malaysian and Pakistani government agencies.

The first MoU was signed between Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation and the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan while the second between the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission and the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority on the development of the digital sector.

The third MoU signed was between Transport Ministry and Pakistan's Ministry of Aviation.

Both leaders then witnessed the launching of selected trans-



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim speaking with his Pakistani counterpart Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad yesterday, AFP

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lated works by renowned Pakistani poet Allama Muhammad Iqbal, translated into Bahasa Melayu, and the *Madani Malaysia* book into Urdu.

Kuala Lumpur and Islamabad had signed a Strategic Partnership accord in 2019 and the South Asian country has been Malaysia's third-largest export destination in the sub-continent

since 2016.

The trade value recorded between the two countries for the first seven months of this year was RM5.10 billion.

Both countries had also inked the Malaysia-Pakistan Closer Economic Partnership Agreement in 2008, covering trade in goods, investments and technical cooperation. **Bernama**