

BOOSTING TIES

'Pakistan has high hopes for Anwar's state visit'

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's three-day visit to Pakistan will open a new chapter in the relations between the two countries.

Malaysian High Commissioner to Pakistan, Datuk Mohammad Azhar Mazlan, on Tuesday said the Pakistani government had high hopes for Anwar's visit to Islamabad.

Anwar's visit started yesterday.

"The prime minister's visit will open a new chapter in diplomatic ties between Malaysia and Pakistan.

"The Pakistani government has also upgraded the prime minister's visit from an official visit to a state visit.

"The relationship between Malaysia and Pakistan is defined as a close brotherhood between two Islamic countries, based on mutual respect and close ties between the people."

Azhar said this at the high commission here.

Malaysia and Pakistan, he said, had signed a strategic partnership accord in 2019 and Pakistan had been Malaysia's third-largest



Malaysian High Commissioner to Pakistan Datuk Mohammad Azhar Mazlan says Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's three-day visit will open a new chapter in ties between the nations. BERNAMA PIC

export destination in South Asia since 2016.

"The trade value between both countries in 2023 stood at RM6.43 billion, with export from Malaysia (to Pakistan) totalling RM4.39 billion.

"Malaysia's imports from Pakistan hit RM2.04 billion, resulting in a trade surplus of RM2.34 billion in Malaysia's favour."

He said trade between the two countries for the first seven months of this year reached RM5.10 billion.

Anwar will hold a meeting with his counterpart, Shehbaz Sharif, followed by a meeting involving delegations from both countries.

"The bilateral meeting will examine areas of cooperation, including trade relations, investment, education and connectivity between the two countries."

Both leaders, he said, were scheduled to witness the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the Malaysia External Trade Development

Corporation and the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan.

They would also attend the MoU signing between the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission and the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority.

Azhar said the leaders would launch translated works by Pakistani poet Allama Muhammad Iqbal, translated into Bahasa Melayu, and the Madani Malaysia book into Urdu.

He said Anwar would deliver a keynote address at the National University of Sciences and Technology in Islamabad, before being awarded an honorary doctorate in philosophy.

Anwar would pay a courtesy call on President Asif Ali Zardari at the latter's official residence, where he would be conferred the highest civilian award, Nishan-e-Pakistan, he added. Anwar, he said, would also meet Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir and other figures. **Bernama**