

HIGHEST RECOGNITION

Pakistan president confers on Anwar highest civilian award

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has been conferred the Nishan-e-Pakistan, the highest civilian award of Pakistan, by the country's president Asif Ali Zardari yesterday.

The ceremony was held at Aiwan-e-Sadr, the Presidential Palace, here.

Earlier, Anwar who is on a three-day state visit to the South Asian country, paid a courtesy call on President Zardari.

Bernama reported that the award is the highest recognition from the Pakistani government for Anwar's leadership in fostering and enhancing bilateral relations between Malaysia and Pakistan.

Also present were Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan, Investment, Trade and Industry

Minister Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz.

After the ceremony, President Zardari hosted the Malaysian prime minister to a state banquet at the Presidential Palace.

The government of Pakistan had also conferred the award to the then Malaysian prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad in 2019.

Malaysia and Pakistan established diplomatic relations in 1957 when Malaysia gained its independence.

Pakistan has been Malaysia's third-largest export destination in South Asia since 2016.

Bilateral trade between the two countries last year stood at RM6.43 billion, with exports from Malaysia totalling RM4.39 billion while the country's imports from Pakistan was RM2.04 billion,



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim being conferred the Nishan-e-Pakistan by President Asif Ali Zardari at Aiwan-e-Sadr, the Presidential Palace yesterday.
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with trade surplus of RM2.34 billion in Malaysia's favour.

After Pakistan, Anwar visited Bangladesh yesterday.

High Commissioner of Malaysia to Bangladesh Haznah Md Hashim said his visit symbolised Malaysia's solidarity with the people of the country, who

are currently facing challenging

times. She said this was the first visit by the head of a foreign government since the formation of the interim government led by Nobel Laureate Dr Muhammad Yunus.

"This visit echoes history, as Malaysia was the first Muslim

country to recognise Bangladesh's independence on Jan 31, 1972," she told a press conference here.

Anwar held a bilateral meeting with Yunus and paid a courtesy call on President Mohammed Shahabuddin before departing for Kuala Lumpur later in the evening. **Bernama**