

GOAL TO BOOST TRADE WITH NZ BY 50pc

Malaysia, NZ to improve defence ties, education links and anti-terror efforts

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Malaysia hopes New Zealand will take in more Malaysian students pursuing energy transition and food technology, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim yesterday.

"We have benefited from these exchanges in the past. There are New Zealand students in Malaysia, and the number of Malaysians there is increasing.

"We have asked them to facilitate the possibility of getting more students to New Zealand, particularly in postgraduate courses, and in new areas where they have expertise, including energy transition and food technology."

Anwar said this at a joint press conference with New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon.

He said their meeting focused on boosting collaboration in trade, investment and research, particularly in the halal industry.

"We acknowledged that it is unfortunate that, despite the significant potential and the strong relationship we have maintained for decades, nearly a century, we have not taken sufficient measures to enhance this collaboration."

He said he would learn from Luxon's advice and experience and make sure things were done fast at the next cabinet meeting.

Luxon arrived on Sunday night for a three-day visit. He was accorded an official welcome at Dataran Perdana.

Luxon and Anwar held a meeting to discuss bilateral matters and exchange views on regional and international issues.

The leaders called for the urgent need to support ceasefire efforts in Gaza.

Anwar said he was doubtful about the prospects for a ceasefire, citing insufficient commitment from other countries.

"The United States wields a lot of influence and can exert its influence to stop the atrocities.

"But right now, there's complete devastation in Gaza. You see



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim welcoming New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon at Dataran Perdana in Putrajaya yesterday, BERNAMA PIC

people who believe in freedom, justice, humanity, compassion, but they fail to understand this. How is it that, in this age, you can allow this?

"The only hope is to engage the United States to take a stronger stance."

Luxon said an immediate ceasefire was needed.

"We both are very united in calling for an immediate ceasefire, getting the parties around the negotiating table and finding a two-state solution."

Luxon said New Zealand and Malaysia agreed to expand bilateral trade by 50 per cent by 2030.

He said the two countries were collaborating on certifications and customs processes to ensure smooth border operations.

"We discussed strengthening our education links and our youth exchanges so that the next generation of Kiwis and Malaysians has that same close relationship that we enjoy."

Luxon said New Zealand had much to learn from Malaysia's remarkable growth.

To explore opportunities, he brought representatives from 17 of New Zealand's largest firms to Malaysia.

"Attracting foreign investment is something that I have looked forward to and have enjoyed discussing with you today as well."

He said the companies were ready to explore opportunities in Malaysia as the country had long been a top 10 export market for New Zealand.

"We feel lucky that you like our nutritious and safe products.

"We've got a diverse range of

businesses here today in Malaysia and we think we can offer you so much more in sectors like tourism and education, where we want to build even greater links between our people."

In 2023, New Zealand was Malaysia's 28th largest trading partner, 22nd largest export destination and 27th largest import source among countries in the Oceania region. Trade between Malaysia and New Zealand amounted to RM11.56 billion.

To boost defence ties, New Zealand will deploy maritime patrol and reconnaissance aircraft in a joint exercise with Malaysia.

Luxon said his country would deploy the new Boeing P-8 Poseidon maritime surveillance aircraft to the Butterworth air base.

"With our strategic partnership, Anwar and I today have agreed to inject more momentum into our collaboration."

He said the two countries agreed to boost efforts in combating transnational crime, terrorism and extremism.

"We both are very conscious of the rise of violent extremism and also wanting to maintain social cohesion in what are increasingly multicultural societies. Those are things that we will continue to work hard at."

Malaysia and New Zealand are members of the Five Power Defence Arrangements, a defence alliance established in 1971 in response to the British military withdrawal from Southeast Asia.

The alliance provides a framework for defence cooperation, joint exercises and the exchange of military knowledge and expertise.