

Kiwi PM: Much to learn from M'sia

PUTRAJAYA: New Zealand believes that it can learn a lot from Malaysia and is impressed by the latter's success in attracting foreign investment.

Describing Malaysia as one of New Zealand's "oldest friends", Prime Minister Christopher Luxon acknowledged Malaysia's growth, saying it is an "incredible story".

"There is much that New Zealand can learn from you and your exceptional success in attracting foreign investment," he said at a joint press conference with his Malaysian counterpart Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim here yesterday.

Luxon said he had wanted to come to Malaysia in his first year in office as there "is room for so much more together".

"With all our strategic partnership, Prime Minister Anwar and I have agreed to inject more momentum into our collaboration," he said.

In 2023, New Zealand was Malaysia's 28th largest trading partner, 22nd largest export destination and 27th largest source of imports among countries in the Oceania region, with the total trade between the two countries amounting to RM11.56bil.

Luxon is here for a three-day official visit - his first since taking office in November 2023.

He is the first New Zealand prime minister to visit Malaysia since 2015.

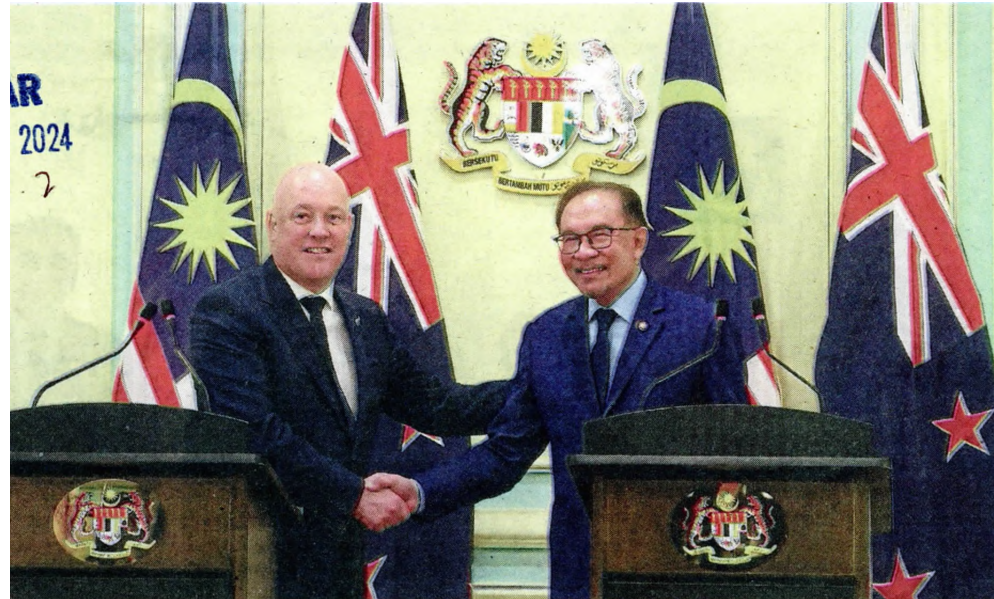
He pointed out that his country's relations with Malaysia go way back even before independence, during the Emergency and also during the Borneo Confrontation.

"We have been with you ever since. And I have to say that you have been with us too.

"Your tremendous support meant a lot for New Zealand when we had to deal with the aftermath of the terrorist attack at a mosque in Christchurch in 2019," he said in reference to a gunman who had attacked the Al Noor mosque during Friday prayers and Linwood Islamic Centre on March 15 that year.

Moving forward, Luxon said that he and Anwar discussed what was needed to strengthen education and youth exchanges between the two countries.

"This is so that the next generation of Kiwis and Malaysians have the same close relations as we have today.



Renewing ties: Anwar shaking hands with Luxon at a joint press conference in Perdana Putra. — Bernama

"The Prime Minister and I both want to make sure the relationship is set up so that in subsequent decades, our young people will continue to build connections with each other," he added.

Meanwhile, Anwar said Malaysia hopes to send more students to New Zealand, particularly postgraduates pursuing further studies in new fields such as energy transition and food technology.

He said this was one area he had requested for Luxon to consider, adding that Malaysia has benefited from student exchanges with New Zealand in the past, and he is looking forward to

expanding this, especially for postgraduate programmes.

"We also discussed continuing our cooperation in the fight against transnational crimes and terrorism.

"This cooperation underscores the shared commitment of both countries to further solidify the relationship and widen the scope of cooperation by leveraging our complementary strengths."

Anwar said both he and Luxon also agreed to enhance collaboration in trade, investment, research and the halal industry.

"We did acknowledge the fact that it is rather unfortunate that despite having so much potential

in the good relations between the two countries, we were not able to enhance this collaboration.

"I have therefore agreed to look into this and see how we can take advantage of our relations and experience to forge close relations," he added.

Anwar also welcomed New Zealand's continued active engagement in Asean-led mechanisms and valued the country's support of Malaysia's Asean chairmanship next year.

On the Palestine-Israel issue, Anwar said both Malaysia and New Zealand hoped for a ceasefire in Gaza that would lead to a lasting and sustainable peace.