



Anwar being greeted by Felda settlers at the event in Lahad Datu yesterday.  
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## We want to maintain close ties with all nations: PM

**LAHAD DATU:** As a sovereign and independent nation, Malaysia has the right to determine what is best for itself and its people, including how it establishes diplomatic ties with other countries, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He said no party should therefore attempt to put pressure on the country in this aspect as Malaysia aims to maintain good relations with all countries.

Anwar, who recently returned from a working visit to Russia, said his meeting with President Vladimir Putin was aimed at strengthening Kuala Lumpur's relationship with Moscow and encouraging Russia to increase its import of palm oil from Malaysia.

"Some people questioned why Malaysia would seek to improve relations with Russia, and what America or Europe might think. We are a free and independent country, we decide what is best for our nation.

"We should maintain good relations with all countries, but no country should try to pressure us," he said while launching the *Segalanya Felda* carnival yesterday.

Anwar said countries such as India, China, Egypt and the Netherlands are among the major importers of Malaysia's palm oil and he is working to ensure that these countries increase their imports of the commodity.

"We are now asking Russia to increase its imports, which is why we are establishing relations with it. China has agreed to increase its import of palm oil.

"When I met with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he also said that India will increase palm oil imports (from Malaysia)."

Anwar said his visits to these countries were also aimed at boosting trade and promoting Malaysia's tourism sector and popular destinations such as Sabah, Sarawak, Langkawi

and Penang, which are deemed to be among the places with the most beautiful natural landscapes in the world.

"This is also to attract tourists from Russia, as Malaysia currently records only about 100,000 Russian tourist arrivals compared with Turkiye which records between five to 10 million tourist arrivals annually?"

Anwar said he had also been invited by Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi to visit Egypt, which he sees as an opportunity to strengthen bilateral relations and persuade Egypt to increase its import of Malaysian palm oil.

"This is my chance to ask him to buy more palm oil from Malaysia. *Insha-Allah*, I will go and convey greetings from Lahad Datu and Sabah to President El-Sisi. I will tell him that the people here grow oil palm and will ask him to buy more palm oil from us in the future," he said to cheers from the crowd. - Bernama