

MALAYSIA, MALDIVES EYE COOPERATION PACT

Solar farms, defence and digital tech among sectors being explored, says PM

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Malaysia is eager to explore new avenues of cooperation with the Maldives, includ-

ing floating solar energy, defence and digital technology, said

Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The prime minister said, grounded in the spirit of mutual benefit, Malaysia and the Maldives — as maritime nations — possessed potential for collaboration.

“I am very pleased with the series of meetings we have held, including bilateral discussions with ministers. Our cooperation already spans areas such as education, tourism, and training.

“However, new areas have been identified for enhanced cooperation between Malaysia and the Maldives, including floating solar energy, defence and digitalisation.”

Anwar said this at a joint press conference held in conjunction with the four-day official visit of the Maldivian President Dr Mohamed Muizzu to Malaysia.

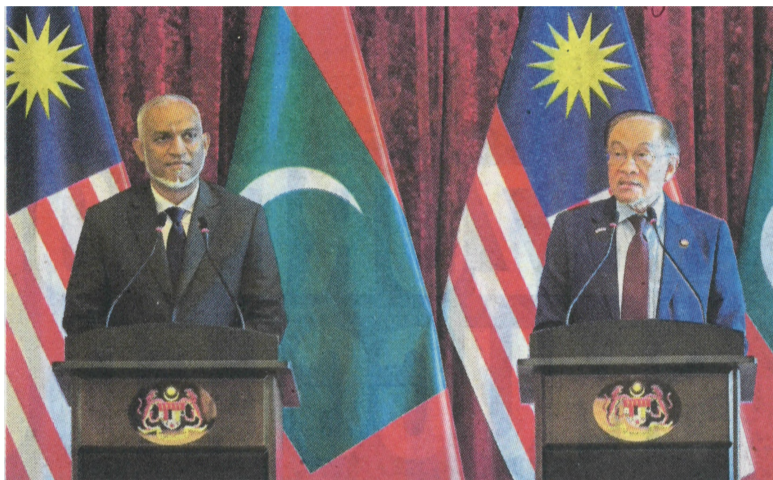
Anwar said cooperation between Malaysia and the Maldives was expanding into science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM); technical and vocational education and training (TVET); higher education; university exchanges; sports and healthcare.

The cooperation is being extended to diplomatic training and bilateral consultations.

On climate change, Anwar reaffirmed Malaysia's full support for the Maldives' stance, which urges the international community to respect the need for environmental protection and to share responsibility in this regard.

“In this matter, we stand with President Muizzu, closely following and supporting his strong stance.”

Meanwhile, Muizzu expressed the Maldives' interest in exploring joint initiatives in digital



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and Maldivian President Dr Mohamed Muizzu holding a joint press conference in Putrajaya yesterday. BERNAMA PIC

transformation, including information technology, artificial intelligence (AI) and cybersecurity.

He hopes to expedite and finalise the memorandum of understanding (MoU) in these fields.

“Malaysia's progress and leadership in the halal industry and digital economy are highly commendable, and I appreciate Prime Minister Anwar's willingness to share Malaysia's expertise with us.

He highlighted the potential to strengthen economic ties and welcomed Malaysian investors to explore opportunities in the Maldives, particularly in special economic zones, business sectors, financial services, maritime economy and digital economy.

On another matter, Anwar said Malaysia and the Maldives stand resolute in their shared commitment to ending the atrocities and mass killings in Palestine, with both nations unwavering in their support for Palestinian rights.

He commended Muizzu for his bold decision to bar individuals holding Israeli passports from entering the country, calling it a principled and decisive stance in the face of ongoing violence.

“We are following this development with great interest, and we support the firm position expressed.

“The Maldives' stance on Palestine, and its very brave decision to bar those carrying Israeli passports from entering the country, are commendable.

“We share the same sentiments and aspirations. On behalf of the government and the people of Malaysia, I would like to express our deep respect and admiration

for the Maldives' courageous and principled stance,” he said.

Anwar said: “Since independence, Malaysia has never granted recognition to Israel, primarily due to their refusal to respect human rights, honour international commitments, and cease the genocidal acts in Palestine, particularly in Gaza.”

Meanwhile, Muizzu reaffirmed the Maldives' steadfast support for the Palestinian cause, highlighting that Palestinians have the right to an independent state based on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Earlier, Muizzu was given an official welcome at Perdana Putra.

He inspected a guard of honour mounted by three officers and 102 members of the First Battalion of the Royal Malay Regiment.

This is his first official visit to Malaysia since assuming office on Nov 17, 2023.

Following the welcome ceremony, Anwar and Muizzu held a private meeting before attending a bilateral meeting.

The two leaders then witnessed the exchange of three MoUs and several notes (EoNs), covering tourism, sports, and health.

The EoNs also included diplomatic training and the establishment of bilateral consultation mechanisms between Malaysia and the Maldives.

In 2024, Malaysia's trade with the Maldives rose by 4.3 per cent to RM862.7 million, up from RM827.3 million in 2023.

The Maldives remains Malaysia's sixth-largest trading partner among South Asian countries.