

# Malaysia, Maldives ink deals, eye closer cooperation

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**PETALING JAYA:** Malaysia and the Maldives are set to ramp up cooperation, focusing on floating solar technologies, digital innovation and defence, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He said the two countries are giving importance to TVET, STEM, higher education, sports and healthcare while advancing diplomatic training and bilateral talks.

"I am very pleased with the series of meetings held, including bilateral discussions with ministers. Our cooperation already spans education, tourism and training.

"However, we have also identified new frontiers for collaboration, including floating solar energy, defence and digitalisation."

He was speaking at a joint media conference during Maldives President Dr Mohamed Muizzu's four-day official visit to Malaysia.

Anwar and Muizzu agreed that climate change, a shared existential threat, demands urgent action.

Muizzu said as a small island nation, Maldives faces existential threats from rising sea levels, and praised Malaysia's leadership in championing global environmental causes.

He said 33% of the Maldives' energy currently comes from renewable sources, with plans to increase this significantly in the coming years.

"We are committed to sustainability, and our environmental priorities align closely with Malaysia's, given the shared vulnerabilities we face."

On education, Muizzu hailed Malaysia's role through the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme which has been pivotal in building human capital in the Maldives.

He expressed gratitude for the over 6,000 scholarships awarded by Malaysia's Higher Education Ministry to Maldivian students.

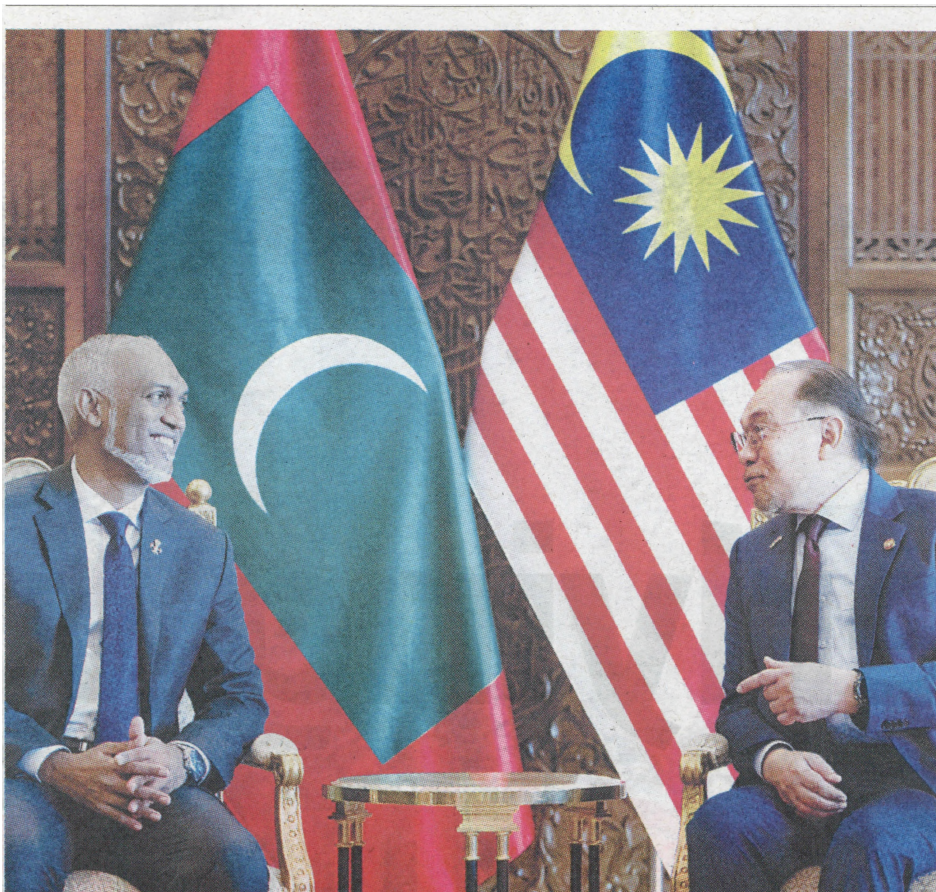
"These scholarships have created tremendous opportunities for our youth to pursue higher education in Malaysia. We look forward to their return to help drive our nation's growth."

The two leaders explored fresh avenues for cooperation, including the *halal* industry and digital technologies.

The issue of Palestine featured prominently in their discussions.

The Maldives has long championed Palestinian statehood, and Muizzu reaffirmed his government's unwavering support for it.

> New frontiers for collaboration include floating solar technologies, digital innovation, defence, *halal* industry: PM



Anwar and Muizzu at their meeting at Bangunan Perdana Putra in Putrajaya yesterday.

**PIC COURTESY OF PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE**

"The Maldives stands firm behind the Palestinian cause and its rightful claim to statehood. We will continue to work with Malaysia to rally international support for Palestine."

Anwar echoed the Maldives' position, applauding its decision to bar Israeli passport holders in protest of Israel's actions in Palestine.

"Since independence, Malaysia has not recognised Israel due to its refusal to respect human rights, honour international commitments and end the genocide in Palestine, particularly in Gaza.

"We share the same sentiments and aspirations regarding Palestine and hold President Muizzu in high regard for his courageous and principled stance."

The leaders also witnessed the signing of

several MoUs, covering cooperation in tourism, health and sports.

They further oversaw the exchange of notes on the training of diplomats and bilateral consultations between their respective Foreign Ministries.

Muizzu is in Malaysia at Anwar's invitation, his first since assuming office on Nov 17, 2023.

The visit marks a fresh chapter in the longstanding diplomatic ties between the two countries, first established in 1968.

Their strengthening relationship is reflected in trade figures, with Malaysia's total trade with the Maldives rising by 4.3% to RM862.7 million in 2024, up from RM827.3 million in 2023.

The Maldives is Malaysia's sixth-largest trading partner among South Asian nations.