



Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah of Brunei and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim attending the signing of a memorandum of understanding as part of the 26th Malaysia-Brunei Annual Leaders' Consultation at the Seri Perdana Complex in Putrajaya yesterday. AFP PIC

SHARED PROSPERITY

Malaysia, Brunei to forge stronger Borneo ties

PUTRAJAYA: Malaysia and Brunei have agreed to strengthen economic cooperation, focusing on Sabah and Sarawak as drivers of shared prosperity and regional integration.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah of Brunei, in a joint statement, reiterated their commitment to advancing strategic initiatives by leveraging Borneo's resources and geographical location.

These initiatives include those in the energy, connectivity, agriculture, tourism and halal industries.

Earlier, the two leaders witnessed the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad and his Brunei counterpart, Datuk Seri Dr Mohammad Isham Jaafar, at the Seri Perdana Complex.

Present were Sarawak Premier Tan Sri Abang Johari Openg and Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Seri Hajiji Noor.

Anwar and Sultan Hassanal also welcomed the improved land access via the Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddin Bridge, which facilitates cross-border trade.

They also looked forward to the completion of the Pan Borneo Highway, which will further strengthen regional connectivity

and expand opportunities for tourism and economic cooperation.

Both countries also recognised the potential for investment through an MoU between the Malaysian Investment Development Authority (Mida) and the Brunei Investment Agency (BIA) signed on Jan 25, 2023, in Bandar Seri Begawan.

The two leaders further acknowledged the existing close cooperation in the energy sector, including the potential for new joint ventures that will provide mutual benefit.

In education, Malaysia and Brunei are looking into negotiations on an MoU that will enable Sabah students to pursue higher education in Brunei.

Both sides reiterated their commitment to strengthening cooperation in various Asean-led security and defence mechanisms to address traditional and non-traditional security challenges.

They also acknowledged the establishment of a joint committee under the MoU on cooperation in the syariah judiciary.

This includes the sharing of syariah court judgment grounds, exchange of publications and academic reports, as well as joint research in Islamic jurisprudence and syariah.

Bernama reported that Malay-

sia and Brunei reaffirmed their commitment to finalise the demarcation and survey of Sector F-G by May 2027, based solely on the watershed principle.

According to the joint statement, Anwar and Sultan Hassanal unequivocally reaffirmed their commitment to the 2009 Exchange of Letters, the Memorandum of Understanding on the Process for the Joint Demarcation and Survey of the Land Boundary signed in March 2012, and its annexed Terms of Reference.

Meanwhile, Malaysia and Brunei affirmed that the Palestinian issue remained the core of the West Asian conflict.

"Both leaders condemned in the strongest terms the boundless violence and the complete blockade of humanitarian access and aid delivery to the Palestinian people," the joint statement said.

Both countries also vehemently rejected the plan to fully occupy the Gaza Strip and the "Greater Israel" vision, which they described as a violation of international law, the UN Charter and related UN resolutions.

On the ongoing violence in Myanmar, Anwar and Sultan Hassanal once again affirmed their joint stance that the Five-Point Consensus remained Asean's primary reference for addressing the political crisis in that country.