

M'sia, Uzbekistan keen to set up joint industrial zone

> Collaboration to pave way for sharing of best practices, expertise in developing manufacturing parks

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia and Uzbekistan see promising prospects to jointly establish an industrial zone in Uzbekistan.

In a joint statement, both countries said this would pave the way for the introduction of best practices and sharing of expertise in the development and operation of industrial parks.

"In addition, this will also foster collaboration in attracting management companies, park managers and other investors for participation in the planning and development of industrial zones in Uzbekistan."

The move follows bilateral talks yesterday between Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and Uzbekistan President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, who is on a two-day official visit to Malaysia, that began on Tuesday.

They also emphasised the importance of enhancing economic cooperation in key sectors such as renewable energy, the *halal*

industry, digitalisation, artificial intelligence, smart city development and startup development to yield mutual benefits for both countries.

"Both leaders also expressed interest to explore partnerships in the palm oil industry," added the statement.

Uzbekistan has also reaffirmed its keen interest in collaborating with Petronas, particularly in the petrochemicals sector and clean green energy solutions.

"Petronas is pleased to support this endeavour by establishing cooperation in terms of technical support, exchange of information and consultation for the related area of interest, while also exploring opportunities for the joint implementation of mutually beneficial investment projects."

During Anwar's official visit to Uzbekistan in May last year, the country expressed interest in collaborating with Petronas, particularly through the

methanol-to-olefins and derivatives project, as well as in the green hydrogen and associated derivatives production, including green ammonia.

It also welcomed Petronas' potential contribution to the training of Uzbekistan personnel in the oil and gas sector, Bernama reported.

Both leaders also agreed to strengthen cooperation by taking advantage of the Visit Malaysia 2026 campaign and explore opportunities in Islamic and *halal* tourism.

It includes the Umrah+ programme to promote Malaysia and Uzbekistan as pre or post-pilgrimage tourism destinations for visitors from both countries.

"Both leaders also agreed to utilise the direct Kuala Lumpur-Tashkent flights of Uzbekistan Airways and Batik Air Malaysia to enhance transport accessibility."

In 2024, Malaysia's total trade with Uzbekistan was RM369.8 million, a slight decline of 13.2% from the RM426.1 million recorded in 2023. The trade balance is in Malaysia's favour at RM360.3 million.

Last year, Uzbekistan was Malaysia's second largest trading partner among Central Asian countries.