

PM's Bahrain visit to bolster bilateral ties

KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim is on an official visit to Bahrain from yesterday, marking a new chapter in Malaysia-Bahrain diplomatic relations.

This is Anwar's first visit to the country as prime minister following an invitation from Bahrain's Crown Prince and Prime Minister Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa.

He is scheduled to hold a courtesy meeting with his Bahraini counterpart to discuss the progress of bilateral relations, trade and investment, defence, food security, Islamic banking, *halal* industry, connectivity and tourism as well as regional and global issues of shared concern.

As Asean chair, Anwar will also invite Bahrain's crown prince for the upcoming Asean-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Summit and the Asean-GCC+China Summit, both to be held in Malaysia.

He is also scheduled to have an audience with Bahrain's King Raja Hamad Isa Al Khalifa, a high honour for Malaysia that reflects the strong bilateral ties between the two nations.

As finance minister, Anwar will also meet his Bahraini counterpart Shaikh Salman Khalifa Al Khalifa to explore economic cooperation opportunities.

Meanwhile, Investment, Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Tengku Zafrul Abdul Aziz said Malaysia has immense potential to strengthen trade and investment ties with Bahrain.

"We believe a stronger partnership with Bahrain offers mutual benefits, unlocking new opportunities for businesses in both our nations, for example in sectors like Islamic finance as well as palm oil and palm oil-based products. We are eager to explore collaborative ventures that drive growth and prosperity for Bahrain and Malaysia."

In 2023, Bahrain was Malaysia's sixth largest trading partner and Malaysia ranked as Bahrain's third-largest trading partner among Asean countries.

Total trade between Malaysia and Bahrain expanded to RM1.19 billion in 2024 compared with RM1.5 billion in 2023.

Malaysia's total exports to Bahrain increased by 17.4% to RM251.2 million compared with RM214 million in 2023, mainly due to higher exports of transport equipment, according to Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation data.

Malaysia's total imports from Bahrain stood at RM934.3 million in 2024 compared with RM1.28 billion the previous year, supported by an increase in imports of metal products.

The two countries celebrated their 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations last year.
- Bernama