

# GOVT MULLS DIGITAL FINANCE POLICY

PM has held talks with Abu Dhabi govt, cryptocurrency platform Binance

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**T**HE government is looking at formulating a policy on digital finance, which could eventually see cryptocurrency and blockchain technology recognised in Malaysia. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said he had dis-

cussed with the Abu Dhabi government and cryptocurrency and blockchain technology giant Binance to study how to move forward with the idea.

"We have talked about digital transformation, data centres and artificial intelligence (AI). We now face demands which require us to think about making significant changes.

"I had lengthy discussions with the Abu Dhabi leadership and Changpeng Zhao, co-founder of the world's largest cryptocurrency platform Binance.

"I proposed several months ago that our agencies, including security, treasury and Bank Negara study how Malaysia can explore this so we aren't left behind.

Ensuring that is reflation could safeguard the people's interests and prevent leakages," he told Malaysian media at the end of his three-day official visit to Abu Dhabi on Tuesday.

Anwar said he would be consulting the cabinet on the move.

"However, this innovation is just like AI, which would revamp the financial world. We should not sit idly by and wait and later be forced to do so after others have done it already," he said.

He cited the example of the United Arab Emirates, which was now a leader in the field.

"They (UAE leaders) feel that they can forge a close cooperation with Malaysia on this issue. We need to discuss this in detail, leave behind the old business

model and give meaning to this digital finance policy.

"We have discussed at length about fintech. But when something new comes about, we get agitated.

"I hope we can be more open to this. I am leaning towards not just approving but also expediting this," he said.

Anwar said Malaysia would not be starting from scratch but would rely on the experiences of others, including Binance and the UAE.

"This is an evolution which happens quickly and requires us to be equally fast. We feel that Malaysia should not be left behind while mired in an old financial system," he said.

Asked when this policy would

take place, he said it would require comprehensive studies from the Treasury, the Securities Commission and Bank Negara Malaysia.

"As with all new ideas raised, there will be some concerns. We have to train our personnel, develop competency, and get the players to participate.

"What is pertinent is that we have excellent relations with the UAE. We told them that we would move on this on the condition that we work as partners to ensure that things are on track.

"This will be a radical departure from the old ways."

Anwar said a paper on the issue would be drafted and presented to the cabinet for endorsement as soon as possible.