

PM MEETS UK'S TOP BUSINESS LEADERS

Malaysia and Britain also endorse plan to boost cooperation in several sectors

LYLIA MARSYA ISKANDAR
LONDON
news@nst.com.my

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim yesterday held one-on-one business meetings with several leading companies during his visit to the United Kingdom (UK).

One of the meetings was with Standard Chartered Bank (SCB) which was led by its chief executive officer Bill Winters, reported Bernama.

According to Malaysian officials, SCB is exploring collaborations with the Malaysian and Singapore governments to facilitate global business entry into the Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone (SEZ).

Anwar also met officials from Jaguar Land Rover, Raw Energy and Yondr, an ongoing project at Sedenak Tech Park, Johor.

Present were Investment, Trade and Industry Minister Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz, Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir and Plantation and Commodities Minister Datuk Seri Johari Abdul Ghani.

Earlier, Anwar attended a roundtable meeting with captains of industry in the United Kingdom, joined by 53 leading industry players from 30 companies and organisations.

Among them were those from Airbus UK, GKN Aerospace, British Malaysian Chamber of Commerce, Shell and BAE Systems.

Meanwhile, Malaysia and the United Kingdom endorsed a joint working plan during the inaugural meeting of the Joint Committee on Trade and Economic Cooperation (Jetco).

In a statement, the Investment, Trade and Industry Ministry said the plan aimed to strengthen cooperation in priority areas, such as legal services, education, standards and compliance, agriculture, and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

It said this first Malaysia-UK Jetco meeting marked the



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim conversing with attendees after the roundtable meeting with British captains of industry in London, the United Kingdom, yesterday. BERNAMA PIC

strengthening of already robust trade relations between Malaysia and the UK, supported by its membership in the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

The ministers who attended the meeting were Tengku Zafrul and UK's Trade Policy and Economic Security Minister Douglas Alexander.

"The ministers had positive discussions in London to explore ways to enhance bilateral trade and investments.

"Both ministers endorsed an ambitious joint work plan to strengthen cooperation in priority areas such as legal services, education, standards and compliance, agriculture, and SMEs. They also discussed potential collaborations in Customs, Islamic finance, cooperatives and social enterprises," it said.

It added that both ministers welcomed the first free trade agreement between Malaysia and the UK, achieved through the UK's accession to the CPTPP, which took effect on Dec 15.

Both parties, it said, were committed to continuing close collaboration to ensure that businesses in Malaysia and the UK fully benefit from the agreement.

In agriculture, food and beverages, Malaysia's Agriculture and Food Security Ministry and the UK's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs have agreed to establish a new Agricultural, Food and Beverages Working Group.

It said this technical dialogue aimed to address trade barriers, promote policy exchanges and identify areas of potential cooperation.

In legal services, it said Malaysia and the UK were collaborating within the Legal Services Working Group to strengthen ties in the legal sector and explore opportunities to enhance bilateral trade in legal services based on internationally recognised principles.

"A key achievement of this group is the extension of the validity period for Qualified Foreign Law Firm licences from three to five years.

"This move provides certainty for UK law firms operating in Malaysia. Both nations will continue to work together on shared interests, including dispute resolution and international trade arbitration," it said.

On education, it said Malaysia's Higher Education Ministry and the UK's Department for Education had signed a memorandum of understanding in May 2023 to enhance collaboration in higher education.

Through the Education Working Group, Malaysia and the UK will cooperate on transnational education and explore opportunities in degree apprenticeships, student mobility, skills development, and teacher training, including the International Qualified Teacher Status.

The UK would support Malaysia's leadership in Asean, the statement said.