

STRENGTHENING TIES

PM starts 2-day trip to Belgium today

BRUSSELS: Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim will start a two-day working trip to Belgium today.

The Foreign Ministry yesterday said this would be the prime minister's first visit to Belgium since assuming office, and was aimed at deepening Malaysia's relations with the country and the European Union.

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

Anwar is scheduled to meet caretaker Prime Minister Alexander De Croo to discuss bilateral relations, intensify cooperation and exchange views on issues of mutual interest.

The prime minister will also meet European Council President Antonio Costa to discuss ways to deepen Malaysia-EU ties and regional cooperation.

As Asean chairman, the prime minister will highlight Malaysia's priorities and Asean's aspirations in addressing international challenges and explore ways to strengthen Asean-EU ties.

The Foreign Ministry said Anwar would also state Malaysia's stand on strengthening regional peace, stability and prosperity within an inclusive, sustainable and future-oriented framework.

Anwar will deliver a keynote speech at the College of Europe titled "Bridging Regions: Strengthening Southeast Asia-European Resilience".

From January to November last year, Malaysia's trade with the EU, including Belgium, amounted to RM200 billion.

To date, there are 1,345 manufacturing projects with EU participation in Malaysia, involving RM239.9 billion in investments and creating 155,933 jobs.

After the visit, Anwar will attend the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

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