

Boosting ties, opening new doors

Eyeing mutual benefits, M'sia-S'pore relations off to a bright start this year

PUTRAJAYA: Malaysia and Singapore are off to a bright start to the year by reaffirming their commitment to foster stronger ties based on mutual respect and understanding.

This followed the successful conclusion of the bilateral meeting between Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and his Singapore counterpart Lawrence Wong here on Tuesday.

In a statement issued yesterday, Wisma Putra said the conclusion reflected the dedication and seriousness of how both nations approached their bilateral relationship.

It said Anwar and Wong, in their joint statement, also expressed their shared aspiration to resolve outstanding issues amicably.

"They emphasised the importance of managing challenges constructively to ensure win-win cooperation, without allowing any single issue to overshadow the broader long-term relation-

ship," Wisma Putra added.

It said the joint statement also included key outcomes such as Singapore's intention to establish consulates in Sabah and Sarawak.

Anwar and Wong witnessed the exchange of the joint agreement between Malaysia and Singapore on the Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone (JS-SEZ) along with six other MOUs and one letter of intent (LOI).

The MOUs involved cooperation in the field of carbon capture and storage; cooperative approaches under Article 6 (paragraph 2) of the Paris Agreement; and in urban development.

It also included cooperation in the fields of social welfare, women and persons with disabilities' empowerment, family, children and community development; preventing and combating transnational crimes; and cooperation in the field of higher education.

After the event, Anwar hailed the JS-SEZ as a "rare and unique" joint initiative between Malaysia



Ties that bind: Anwar shaking hands with Wong after a joint press conference at the Perdana Putra in Putrajaya. - Bernama

and Singapore to mutually attract top global investors, saying it was very rare to find two countries working together as a team to promote investments in a single project.

Wong had said that there

were many advantages for foreign investors at the JS-SEZ, and urged them to look at the entire ecosystem that complemented one another and not Johor or Singapore by itself.

The JS-SEZ, which encompasses

an area of 3,505sq km, is a unique initiative between Malaysia and Singapore to promote both nations and attract investments.

Touted as an investment gateway to the Asean market, it is expected to strengthen business collaboration between Singapore, the Iskandar Malaysia economic corridor and the Pengerang petrochemical hub.

The key attractions of the special zone will include a passport-free immigration system and improved passenger rail lines between Johor and the city-state.

Target sectors of the JS-SEZ include manufacturing, logistics, digital, industry, healthcare and education.

Wong and his delegation arrived in Malaysia on Monday for the 11th Malaysia-Singapore Leaders' Retreat.

The annual retreat was established in 2007 to serve as the cornerstone of Malaysia-Singapore relations and as the highest-level bilateral platform.