



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and the Malaysian delegation attending a roundtable with Russian business leaders in Moscow yesterday. BERNAMA PIC

## HIGH-LEVEL ENGAGEMENTS

# ANWAR MEETS PUTIN, TOP RUSSIA EXECS

**PM discusses collaboration in sectors including agriculture, tech, logistics and finance**

### MOSCOW

**P**RIME Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim spent his second day in Russia attending a series of high-level engagements aimed at strengthening trade and strategic ties with Moscow. The highlight of the day, of course, was his meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin at the Kremlin. He began yesterday with a roundtable with executives from 24 major Russian companies and two business councils at the historic Metropol Hotel here. Talks focused on potential collaboration in areas such as agriculture, technology, logistics, manufacturing and financial services. Anwar is accompanied on this trip by five ministers, including Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan, Plantation and Commodities Minister Datuk Seri Johari Abdul Ghani and Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir. Following the business session, the prime minister met his Russian counterpart, Mikhail Mishustin, at the House of Government. The two leaders discussed



**MUHAMMED AHMAD HAMDAN**

trade facilitation, education and broader economic cooperation. Later, the Malaysian delegation, which also includes Agriculture and Food Security Minister Datuk Seri Mohamad Sabu and Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Chang Lih Kang, headed to the Kremlin for the key meeting with Putin. Talks covered technology exchange, energy and food security, higher education, the halal economy and multilateral collaboration. At press time, Anwar was also scheduled to meet Grand Mufti Sheikh Ravil Gaynutdin, chairman of Russia's Council of Muftis. At a dinner with Malaysians in Russia on Tuesday night, Anwar pledged to simplify the voting process for Malaysians abroad, especially students, before the next general election. He said he had raised the matter with the Election Commission. However, he said the commission was an independent body and the government could not interfere in its operations. Anwar said he supported efforts to ensure all Malaysians, regardless of where they resided,

could exercise their democratic right.

"I have raised this matter with the commission. Why can't we ensure that every citizen, no matter where they are, is able to fulfil their right to vote?" he said during a question-and-answer session at the event.

Anwar said technological advancements could make the voting more accessible and secure, citing options such as facial recognition and blockchain to maintain the integrity of the process.

"With today's advanced platforms, the process must be more rigorous. Blockchain technology, for example, can track the voting process from start to finish and prevent tampering," he said.

The prime minister was responding to a question from final-year medical student Ahmad Hamizan Hadi Ahmad Hakimi of Kursk State Medical University.

Hamizan said he and many of the 345 Malaysian students at the university were unable to vote in the last general election due to the distance between their campus and the Malaysian embassy here.

Anwar said the concern was valid and needed to be addressed to prevent Malaysians abroad from being disenfranchised.

"We will make sure that before the next general election, a process is in place to make voting more convenient. If not, millions of our young people overseas could lose their right to vote.

"Technically, they can still vote by going to the embassy, but that process is unnecessarily burdensome."