

# PM: WE CAN LEARN A LOT FROM ETHIOPIA

**African nation's history offers lessons on solidarity, interfaith relations, says Anwar**



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**P**RIME Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said there was a lot to be learnt from Ethiopia, especially on matters concerning interfaith relations and solidarity.

He said those familiar with Islamic history would know the role that Ethiopian Orthodox Christians played in sheltering Prophet Muhammad's first followers, who were fleeing persecution by the Quraysh, the Arab tribe that controlled Makkah before the rise of Islam.

He said the Muslims had sought and were granted refuge in the ancient city of Ethiopia by its then-monarch, Najashi.

"It is important for our multi-religious society to understand and learn that not everything must be viewed through conflict and strained lenses. We can learn a lot from what happened here centuries ago," said Anwar when wrapping up his maiden trip to the African nation.

"These lessons on relations between different religions, freedom and humanity are all there for us to emulate."

Anwar is the first serving prime minister to visit Ethiopia since the establishment of diplomatic relations with Malaysia in 1965.

The prime minister was here on a reciprocal visit following his counterpart Dr Abiy Ahmed Ali's trip to Kuala Lumpur in October last year.

Since then, Malaysia has reopened its embassy here in September, which was closed in



*Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim with his Ethiopian counterpart, Dr Abiy Ahmed Ali, in Addis Ababa yesterday, PIC FROM PM'S OFFICE*

1983 due to internal turmoil in the once famine-stricken country.

"Our diplomatic relations may not have been that strong previously, but there is undoubtedly a strong relationship between our people based on the historic events," Anwar added.

Speaking about his trip here, Anwar said he had met his counterpart and been given the opportunity to visit several museums, including the Adwa Victory Memorial Museum.

The museum, he said, was dedicated to the Battle of Adwa between the Ethiopian Empire and Italy in 1896.

The battle, which was won by the Ethiopians, marked a major turning point in African history.

Earlier on Wednesday, Anwar was accorded an official welcome at the National Palace in the city centre.

He was received by Abiy before he inspected a guard of honour and adjourned for bilateral meetings.

Present were Investment, Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Tengku Zafrul Abdul Aziz, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Federal Territories) Datuk Seri Dr Zaliha Mustafa, Foreign Ministry secretary-general Datuk Seri Amran Mohamed Zin and Embassy of Malaysia in Ethiopia Charge d'Affaires Mohd Afandi Abu Bakar.

Anwar later departed for Johannesburg to lead the Malaysian delegation at the G20 Leaders Summit.

Anwar is attending the summit in Malaysia's capacity as the 2025 Asean chair and on the invitation of South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, who is also this year's G20 president.

The G20 theme under South Africa's presidency, "Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability", and Malaysia's Asean chairmanship theme for 2025, "Inclusivity and Sustainability", are closely aligned in prioritising equitable and sustainable development for high-growth economies.

Wisma Putra, in a statement, said Anwar was expected to highlight Asean's perspective in two sessions at the summit.

He was also expected to hold a bilateral meeting with Ramaphosa to build on and review discussions initiated during the latter's official visit to Malaysia last month while attending the 47th Asean Summit and related summits.

"Both leaders are expected to discuss key areas of cooperation, including trade and investment, palm oil, halal industry, education, as well as capacity building, while also exploring new opportunities to deepen bilateral relations.

"The prime minister will also receive a courtesy call from Botswana Vice-President Ndaba Nkosinathi Gaolathe. They are expected to discuss matters of mutual interest aimed at strengthening bilateral ties, including cooperation under the country's economic transformation programme."

Anwar is also expected to hold meetings with his counterparts from the G20 member and guest countries on the margins of the summit.

He is also scheduled to meet leaders of South Africa's Muslim community and local key industry players in a business forum, as well as meeting the Malaysian diaspora during a dinner in Johannesburg.