

PM ANWAR'S VISIT TO CHINA TO BOOST KL-BEIJING STRATEGIC TIES
DATO' SERI ANWAR BIN IBRAHIM
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BEIJING, March 29 — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's three-day official visit to China from Thursday is expected to open a new chapter in strengthening the strategic relationship between Kuala Lumpur and Beijing in a more comprehensive way.

This is Anwar's maiden visit to this East Asian country since taking office last November.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir said this visit is historic and meaningful, considering that the prime minister had received an invitation from the Chinese government to visit the republic only four months after being sworn in to lead the new Malaysian government.

This year also marks the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the Malaysia-China Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and the two countries would also celebrate the 50th anniversary of their diplomatic relations next year.

"This clearly shows the aspirations of the Chinese government, especially President Xi Jinping who has just been appointed as President for the third term, to forge closer ties with the Anwar's Unity Government," he told the media here late last night.

Zambry said Anwar is also one of the first world leaders to visit Beijing after Xi's re-appointment earlier this month.

The prime minister is expected to arrive here on Thursday evening after attending the Boao Annual Forum for Asia in Hainan and to be met on arrival by China's Deputy Foreign Minister Sun Weidong.

Zambry said Anwar is scheduled to pay a courtesy call on President Xi on Friday, where discussions will focus on new steps that can be taken in various fields to boost and strengthen bilateral relations.

"They will also discuss concrete measures that can be taken in the field of trade, political cooperation, prevention of corruption, and civilisational issues," he said.

Zambry said the two leaders will also exchange opinions on the direction of bilateral relations taking into account the increasingly challenging international scenario.

This will be followed by a meeting with the Chairman of the National People's Congress Zhao Leji where the discussion will focus on cooperation at the parliamentary level of both countries.

On Saturday evening, Anwar will be accorded an official welcoming ceremony at the Great Hall of the People by Chinese Premier Li Qiang, which will be followed by a bilateral meeting.

"The discussion between the two leaders will focus on detailing the steps that can be taken, especially in the fields of economy, trade and investment," said Zambry.

He said in addition to deliberating concrete efforts to increase trade and closer relations between the two countries, Anwar is also expected to discuss issues

of mutual interest during his meeting with the Chinese leaders including international and regional geopolitical issues, as well as security and stability in the Indo-Pacific.

The prime minister is also scheduled to deliver a public lecture at Tsinghua University, which is one of the most distinguished universities in China, in addition to attending a round-table meeting with high-profile investors and Chinese captains of industry.

Anwar is also scheduled to deliver a keynote address at a business forum which will be attended by nearly 1,000 participants from Malaysia and China.

Despite his jam-packed itinerary, Anwar is also scheduled to attend a breaking of fast ceremony with Malaysians in China organised by the Malaysia-China Chamber of Commerce, which will also be attended by leaders of Muslim communities in China, Zambry said.

During the three-day visit, at least 14 memoranda of understanding (MoUs) related to trade and agriculture will be signed between the two countries.

Apart from Zambry, the Malaysian delegates comprised Minister of International Trade and Industry Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Abdul Aziz, Minister of Transport Anthony Loke, Minister of Local Government Development Nga Kor Ming, Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation Chang Lih Kang and Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture Datuk Seri Tiong King Sing.

China has been Malaysia's largest trading partner since 2009. The value of trade between Malaysia and China in 2022 has reached 17.1 per cent of Malaysia's total global trade worth RM2.8 trillion.

The total trade between the two countries in 2022 was RM487.13 billion, which is an increase of 15.6 per cent compared to the previous year.

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