

THAILAND'S PORT, LAND BRIDGE PROJECT WILL BENEFIT MALAYSIA – PM ANWAR
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BUKIT KAYU HITAM, Nov 27 (Bernama) — Thailand's plan to build sea ports and a land bridge which will shorten the journey of ships without the need to go through the Straits of Melaka will also benefit Malaysia especially northern Peninsular Malaysia.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said the government will ensure Malaysia benefits and is involved in the project.

He added that Thai Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin assured the involvement of Malaysia in the project.

“The land bridge is still in the initial stage but in the discussions (with Srettha), it will involve Malaysia especially northern peninsula.

“We have benefits (from the project), whether in terms of facilities there or equity is still too early for discussion.

“But the spirit displayed by the Thai Prime Minister was clear when he told me that they will make sure Malaysia will benefit and be involved in the project” said Anwar at a media conference after a one-day working visit to Sadao, Songkhla Province in Thailand near here today.

At the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit in San Francisco recently, Srettha was reported to have raised the idea of the project costing RM131

billion via the construction of new ports in Ranong on the west and Chumpon on the east which will be connected by rail and road.

The 90-kilometre route is expected to shorten the journey by sea by four days and save 15 per cent in cost between the Gulf of Thailand and the Andaman Sea.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister described Srettha as being committed to settle the issues raised involving the two countries apart from wanting the decision to be reached to benefit Thailand and Malaysia.

“In the detailed discussions with Srettha, the Thai Prime Minister said Phuket will benefit (in tourism) and he ordered Thai Tourism Minister to distribute the impact to Langkawi for greater synergy between the countries.

“This attitude of sharing is rare in the relationship between two countries, so I express my appreciation for his attitude and this is not once, in several previous meetings in Putrajaya in San Francisco and before that in New York I saw him being consistent.

“There cannot be a bilateral relationship that only benefits one country and less to the other country. So that’s why when we have benefits we share with him, and in tourism, he remembers us,” he said.

Earlier, Anwar held a one-day working visit to Sadao, Songkhla Province near here with a focus on discussing issues related to Malaysia-Thailand bilateral cooperation with Srettha.

The visit, which was at Srettha’s invitation, was aimed, among other things, at seeing the progress of the road alignment project connecting the Bukit Kayu Hitam Immigration, Customs, Quarantine and Security (ICQS) checkpoint in

Malaysia and the Customs, Immigration and Quarantine (CIQ) Complex in Sadao, Thailand.

Anwar who was accompanied by several ministers, deputy ministers and senior government officials also held a four-eye meeting with Srettha before the two leaders then visited the meeting point of the Road Alignment Project Connecting Bukit Kayu Hitam ICQS and CIQ Sadao, which is a bilateral project that is currently being implemented in Malaysia and Thailand.

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