

**WORKING VISIT TO SADAO AMONG EFFORTS TO DEVELOP NORTHERN
PENINSULA, SOUTHERN THAILAND REGIONS - PM ANWAR
DATO' SERI ANWAR BIN IBRAHIM
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BUKIT KAYU HITAM, Nov 27 (Bernama) — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said that his one-day working visit to Sadao in southern Thailand today is part of the efforts to further strengthen bilateral relations to promote and develop the northern Peninsular Malaysia and southern Thailand regions.

He said that among the matters discussed in his meeting with his Thai counterpart Srettha Thavisin during the visit were the mutual benefits of enhancing the tourism sector and cooperation in the halal industry.

“The Thai Prime Minister also expressed concern, stating that Malaysian tourist arrivals to Thailand are higher than Thai tourist arrivals to Malaysia and he had directed the Thai Tourism Minister, and I asked the Malaysian Tourism Minister, to hold a meeting so that both countries can benefit.

“Meaning, there is a synergy between the two countries to boost the tourism industry in both countries, including the southern Thailand region, Langkawi, Kedah, Perlis, and Penang.

“...he also directed the Thai Tourism Minister to ensure that the benefits enjoyed in Phuket can also be partially distributed to Langkawi as part of the synergy,” he told a press conference at the Immigration, Customs, Quarantine and Security (ICQS) here, after the visit.

Regarding the efforts to enhance cooperation in the halal industry for both countries, Anwar said that Malaysia has strength in terms of halal certification, which is recognised worldwide, while Thailand has an advantage in food production.

Elaborating, the Prime Minister said that in the meeting, they also discussed efforts to ensure fast and safe movement of people through the new road link (project) connecting the Bukit Kayu Hitam ICQS complex with the Customs, Immigration, and Quarantine Complex (CIQ) in Sadao, Thailand.

“It (the project) has been delayed...we need to complete it promptly, it will take a bit of time because it involves the military area, we need to discuss it further and within two weeks, we will resolve it,” he said.

The Prime Minister said other efforts, such as expediting the construction of the Rantau Panjang-Sungai Golok Bridge in Kelantan, which is currently awaiting feedback from the Thai government for implementation by next year at the latest.

“For the approval of the EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) and subsequently expediting the construction of Rantau Panjang-Sungai Golok, I will inform the progress to the Kelantan Menteri Besar and state government so that they can assist,” he said.

Anwar said the government also agreed to enhance cooperation in terms of enforcement to curb poaching activity, a concern raised by the Thai Prime Minister in the meeting.

Meanwhile, Anwar said Malaysia and Thailand have also agreed to a joint task force to focus on assignments related to committees in the areas of investment, tourism, agriculture, food security, and safety, in addition to tasks

through the Annual Joint Committee Meeting between the Prime Ministers of Malaysia and Thailand.

He said the report on the discussions on all issues related to bilateral relations during the meeting will be prepared within two weeks, and all the meeting notes will be shared with the Thai authorities for feedback.

“...if not, these negotiations will go nowhere for years.

“So, if we are serious about developing these regions and also want to improve the living standards and income of the people here, every effort must be expedited,” he said.

Anwar’s one-day visit, held at the invitation of Srettha, among others, aims to review the progress of the road link project and discuss issues related to Malaysia-Thailand bilateral cooperation.

The prime minister was accompanied by Works Minister Datuk Seri Alexander Nanta Linggi; Tourism, Arts and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Tiong King Sing; Deputy Foreign Minister Datuk Mohamad Alamin; and Deputy Transport Minister Datuk Hasbi Habibollah.

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