



MEDIA RELEASE

PROMOTING MALAYSIA AS A TRADE AND INVESTMENT HUB TO QATARI BUSINESSES

Senior Minister and Minister of International Trade and Industry, YB Dato' Seri Mohamed Azmin Ali arrived in Doha, State of Qatar, today for a three-day Trade and Investment Mission (TIM) to promote Malaysia as an investment destination of choice, as well as reinforce confidence from the global business community to source from Malaysia.

Getting straight to business upon arrival, Dato' Seri Azmin Ali held a bilateral meeting with his counterpart, His Excellency Ali bin Ahmed Al Kuwari, Minister of Commerce and Industry where they discussed a broad spectrum of matters including how best to move forward on collaboration initiatives for bilateral and regional economic cooperation to spur trade and investment ties as well as sustainable economic recovery.

Both Ministers complimented the strong bilateral trade and investment relations but agreed that there are many opportunities to do more. In the spirit of such close ties, Ministers agreed to keep an open mind on any mutually beneficial ideas for further cooperation.

Senior Minister commended Qatar for managing the pandemic well. Malaysia too is currently managing the latest outbreak of the pandemic. Ensuring Malaysia's and also the region's economic recovery, Dato' Seri Azmin shared that Malaysia is accelerating our immunisation programme, targeted to achieve herd immunity by end of the year.

His Excellency Ali shared his view that 2020 was also a challenging year and 2021, although promising, is still affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. On immunisation, the State of Qatar planned to achieve herd immunity by mid-July or early August 2021.



Both Ministers also shared views on economic lockdowns as a measure to contain the pandemic and agreed that the impact of such shutting would bring more harm than good to the economy in the long run.

Dato' Seri Azmin shared with His Excellency Ali that Malaysia has allocated RM530 billion in stimulus packages to assist continuity of economic activities and the livelihood of the people during the pandemic. As a result, Malaysia's GDP was projected to reach 6.0% in 2021. However, due to the latest surge of cases, it is currently revised to 4.5%. Nonetheless, Senior Minister highlighted that Malaysia has the fundamental strength which resulted in record breaking exports of more than RM100 billion for the months of March, April and May this year.

His Excellency Ali expressed Qatar's keenness to host the 3rd Malaysia-Qatar Joint Trade Committee (JTC) and would convey suitable timing for such a meeting via diplomatic channels when the pandemic situation improves. In response, Senior Minister conveyed Malaysia's readiness to convene such a meeting. To empower the JTC meeting, Dato' Seri Azmin proposed to bring in private sector participation and both Ministers concurred that such an idea is paramount so as to propel the private sector to be the prime mover of the economy.

His Excellency Ali also suggested for stronger business-to-business relations that could be facilitated by our respective Governments. Senior Minister concurred with His Excellency Ali's view, noting that cross relations between Government and private sector could always be supported as long as it brings mutual benefit to all parties.

His Excellency Ali highlighted the need to continue to work on the Investment Guarantee Agreement (IGA) where the protection to investment accorded under IGA will encourage more investment crossflows between Qatar and Malaysia. His Excellency Ali further suggested that signing of such an agreement could be done at the next JTC Meeting.



Dato' Seri Azmin reiterated the principle agreement that Qatar use Malaysia as its trading hub in the ASEAN region, underscoring that Malaysia offers the best location in the region. He highlighted that with the signing of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement, Malaysia has become more attractive as it is connected to a market size of over 2 billion people. His Excellency Ali was keen to discuss further and would instruct its officials to begin deliberating on this concept. Conversely, Qatar proposed that Malaysian companies use Qatar as hub into their region.

On bilateral investment, Senior Minister advocated Malaysian projects requiring capital funding as the key to advancing Malaysia's interest. To take this forward, the Malaysian Investment Development Authority (MIDA) will share the list of the projects to the Investment Promotion Agency of Qatar (IPAQ). Dato' Seri Azmin also noted that there is an existing MOU between MIDA and IPAQ but stressed that such an MOU must be translated into action.

Senior Minister also took the opportunity to promote the National Investment Aspirations (NIA), underscoring that a new policy is needed to adapt to new challenges while giving focus on innovation as well as issues concerning environmental, social responsibility and governance (ESG). His Excellency Ali shared that Qatar is also giving importance on ESG issues while at the same time focusing its resources on LNG industry.

Senior Minister shared with His Excellency Ali the difficulty of PETRONAS competing with Qatar Petroleum on LNG pricing in the international market, pointing out the synergies that can be availed with cooperation from His Excellency Ali would ensure sustainability of the LNG business for both our companies.

The Trade and Investment Mission will also see Senior Minister holding targeted one-to-one business meetings with prominent leaders of Qatari companies as well as



potential investors to further explore new business opportunities and collaboration in the retail service, cyber security and expanding Malaysia's footprint in the global halal industry.

The Mission, organised by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), is crucial to demonstrating Malaysia's business friendly policy and comprehensive measures to solidify economic cooperation with key regional partners. The Mission is also the Senior Minister's first official visit to the State of Qatar since taking office.

In view of Malaysia's long-standing bilateral relationship with the State of Qatar, this Mission is key towards strengthening the synergy with the State of Qatar in charting the next phase of economic cooperation for mutual benefit. Malaysia hopes to continue to attract quality and high-impact investments from the State of Qatar to further catalyse value creation, in line with the country's National Investment Aspirations.

In 2020, the State of Qatar was Malaysia's sixth largest trading partner and seventh source of import in the West Asia region. The total trade between both countries was recorded at RM2.10 billion (USD0.50 billion) with Malaysia's exports to Qatar amounted to RM1.13 billion (USD0.27 billion) and imports value totalled at RM0.97 billion (USD0.23 billion). Majority of the investments from the State of Qatar are in commercial real estate development and insurance services.

Recognizing the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, Dato' Seri Azmin Ali is accompanied by a small delegation of senior officials from MITI, Malaysian Investment Development Authority (MIDA) and Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE). In addition, the Mission will be subjected to strict COVID-19 Preventive Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) as agreed upon by Malaysia's Ministry of Health (MOH) and National Security Council (NSC) as well as by the Government of the State of Qatar. Members of delegation are required to undergo mandatory quarantine as soon as they return to Malaysia as prescribed by the MOH.



MINISTRY OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND INDUSTRY (MITI)

4 JULY 2021

About MITI

MITI is the key driver in making Malaysia the preferred destination for quality investments and enhancing the nation's rising status as a globally competitive trading nation. Its objectives and roles are oriented towards ensuring Malaysia's rapid economic development and help achieve the country's stated goal of becoming a developed nation.

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