

VERBATIM TEXT

YAB DATO' SERI ANWAR BIN IBRAHIM

PRIME MINISTER OF MALAYSIA

AT

**HI-TEA ENGAGEMENT WITH THE GOVERNOR OF KERALA;
MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES & COMMERCE, IT & AI OF
KERALA; AND PROMINENT INDIAN BUSINESS LEADERS**

14 SEPTEMBER 2026

Excellency Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar.

Thank you very much for gracing us today. And I'm more appreciative for the fact that the governor took time to join us. Because I think this important session for us to know one another, to encourage bilateral relations, to enhance our economic, trade, educational, and cultural. So, thank you, brother Faizal (Mr. Faizal E. Kottikollon) for giving us opportunity. And just water or no tea? Not today, you just serving us water (joking). Because I saw in the

program it was a tea reception. All right. Thank you. Thank you. A good friend has been very kind.

But I think this is a more interactive session now. I'm here on invitation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to attend the BRICS and more also to continue with bilateral relations. We had this special session with him and focus on trade investments, E&E and semiconductor, education, AI fields, education, training and the focus in BRICS now.

And I had opportunity meeting many, many BRICS leaders is to ensure that we trade and invest among one another. It is not to preclude the other countries. Malaysia remains with the United States, number one trading partner and number one investments, from the United States.

But having said that, we think we should diversify. India is an important country, an emerging economy. And you can see huge advancement from the time of, you know, in the last Prime Ministers and until now under Prime Minister Modi, you can see this upward trend. So, I'm of course very fortunate because to have him as a

friend and to then use this friendship to enhance our bilateral relations in all fields.

And because of that we can be more confident. And as I said, I know the governor is here. I mentioned to him Kerala, probably Tamil Nadu. To go by Tamil Nadu, Chief Minister Vijay is overseas. So, I thought I will just focus on Kerala before I leave for Maldives. And you see, because of friendship, it doesn't save. But Kerala is under the opposition party, for example. It does not arise. And as you know, I think India is an important country, and we have important friendship.

So, I told him that some of the old friends I will continue to meet. And he was kind enough to say, you know, "please, I'll facilitate", and make sure that things are okay. So, I met Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka yesterday. To some media people are not too happy. I say, why you're not happy? I'm happy, Modi happy.

But this I think, should not lose sight of our main focus. So, we are here today to focus on what we can do, you know, in trade, in investment. We are not dismantling the old arrangements or discouraging you to go elsewhere, but here the enormous

opportunity, Malaysia and ASEAN. But Malaysia comes from one of the most peaceful regions in the world. And now you don't have too many.

And number two, it is an emerging economy and is focusing more in terms of E&E and semiconductor in Southeast Asia, and energy economy we are probably about the largest now, including export to the United States. So, with the strength of the E&E, semiconductor of India, can you imagine if that synergy is fortified to enhance our capability and make sure that we benefit from one another? I think it's important.

And why Kerala? One reason, because all my lawyers are Malayali. When I was struggling in prison, there's a Nair and the Kutty and the Koya, they were all there making noise in the court. You know Malayali. I know from the history of Krishna Menon. Yeah, yeah. The longest ever speech in the United Nations.

So that's the only issue, problem that I have with my Malayali friends. So, how to get them to say thank you very much and stop. And I'm joking. So, you know, I'm very comfortable today. Governor, please excuse me, Faizal. I'm here like friend, like I've been here

umpteen times, you know, and I'm so touched because of the friendship shown. Like last night, we were going to the knowledge city with Sheikh Abu Bakar, who I admired and respected a long time. You can see people, thousands in the street. So I'm thinking if the governor says okay, I may think of contesting the elections here. Media here, please, I don't want to be in trouble with my friend Modi or Kerala Chief Minister, please, I'm just joking.

No, no. So, what I mean is a sense of friendship is there. It's not usual. It comes from a sentiment. We value friendship, we value culture and this Malabari coast, you know, it's so important in the region, in the world, to the extent that in historical antecedents and context is considered the Indianization of Southeast Asia. Because the culture, the religion, both Hindu and Islam, are from here, from the Malabar Coast.

And knowledge, intellectual tradition, culture, the vibrancy, although we opened up, they were from China, Muslims from China, from the Middle East, from Yemen. But Kerala happens to be one pivotal area where the whole cultural fabric foundation has fortified, and therefore I think that opportunity should be fully utilized. I mean the governor's support and the Chief Minister,

whom I met today, of course, people like Faizal and his colleagues. We should do more. Although Faizal is a great friend. The whole family is here, but he has hardly any investment in Malaysia. There is small, so encouraging. So as a friend.

Now I'm fortunate to be Prime Minister, and some of you may know my turbulence and up and down experience in life. More down than up. But now I'm here. I think they asked me, "Anwar, what do you aim to do?", I think I want to do my best to improve the governance of the country, to rid the country of misdeeds and corruption and to ensure that Malaysia emerges as an important nation in Southeast Asia.

And this can only be done if we expand the relationship with many friends throughout the world, and also to be able to attract them to participate together. Investments from Malaysia to Kerala and from Kerala and the neighboring states into Malaysia.

Thank you very much. I'm not Malayali, so I will stop now.