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Putin Meets With Malaysian Prime Minister in Moscow

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Vladimir Putin and Anwar Ibrahim. **kremlin.ru**

Russian President Vladimir Putin hosted Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim in the Kremlin on Wednesday for talks focused on economic cooperation amid Western sanctions.

The meeting came two days after the UN's civil aviation body held Russia responsible for the 2014 downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 over Ukraine. Despite the timing, Putin said the two countries were considering launching direct flights.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov had told reporters that the International Civil Aviation Organization's (ICAO) report was an attempt to "derail" Ibrahim's visit.

Putin said the talks covered a "full range" of bilateral and international issues, resulting in "concrete plans" to deepen ties. He added that the next session of the Russian-Malaysian intergovernmental economic commission is scheduled for the fall.

Energy cooperation, including potential joint projects in gas and nuclear energy, was

highlighted as a key area for future development.

Ibrahim, who is scheduled to attend the "Russia-Islamic World" forum in Tatarstan later this week, invited Putin to the ASEAN summit in October.

Earlier Wednesday, Ibrahim met with Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin, who noted "good opportunities" for cooperation in energy, industry, transportation, agriculture and the digital economy.

Ibrahim expressed hope for overcoming sanctions-related barriers to economic cooperation and said Malaysia aimed to learn from Russia's shift from food import dependence to agricultural self-sufficiency.

Russia banned many Western food imports in response to sanctions imposed over its 2014 annexation of Crimea.

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