

# President Halimah to make KL state visit, have orchid named after her

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President Halimah Yacob will be making a state visit to Malaysia from Monday to Wednesday at the invitation of the country's King, Sultan Abdullah Ahmad Shah.

Her trip to Kuala Lumpur will include a state welcome ceremony and banquet at the Istana Negara, the King's official residence, where she will also have an orchid named in her honour.

This is the first time an orchid-naming ceremony will be part of a state visit by a foreign dignitary to Malaysia, said the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) on Saturday.

During the three-day visit, Madam Halimah will receive a call

from Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim and meet female politicians.

She will also meet the Sultan of Perak and chancellor of the University of Malaya Nazrin Shah, in her capacity as chancellor of the National University of Singapore.

Madam Halimah's trip comes shortly after Datuk Seri Anwar's visit to Singapore in end-January – the first here since he was sworn in as prime minister in November. He met Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and called on Madam Halimah at the Istana.

Singapore Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan also visited Malaysia in January.

This is Madam Halimah's first state visit to Malaysia and it reciprocates Sultan Abdullah's visit to Singapore in October 2022.

He and his wife, Tunku Azizah Aminah Maimunah Iskandariah,

will host a state banquet in Madam Halimah's honour.

The King and Madam Halimah will also plant a gelam tree in the Istana Negara courtyard. On the same day, the Vanda Halimah Yacob Mohamed will be named in honour of Madam Halimah and her husband, Mr Mohamed Abdullah Alhabshee, who will be accompanying her on the trip.

She will also be accompanied by Minister in the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister for Education and Foreign Affairs Malingi Osman, Minister of State for Trade and Industry and Culture, Community and Youth Low Yen Ling as well as MPs Murali Pillai, Xie Yao Quan and Yeo Wan Ling.

Officials from the President's Office, MFA and Ministry of Trade and Industry will be part of the delegation.

Mr Eddie Teo, who chairs the Council of Presidential Advisers, will be acting president while Madam Halimah is away.

Other plans for her visit include a meeting with a group of Singaporean and Malaysian business leaders, as well as a reception hosted for overseas Singaporeans in Malaysia, said MFA.

Madam Halimah, who is also patron of Girl Guides Singapore, will be hosted during a visit to the Girl Guides Association of Malaysia by Tunku Azizah. The latter visited Girl Guides Singapore during her visit to the Republic in October.

In an e-mail interview with Malaysian news agency Bernama that was published on Saturday, Madam Halimah noted that the ties between Singapore and Malaysia are "quite unlike any other".

She added that there are many

areas in which both countries can strengthen and deepen trade and investments, as well as collaborate in new areas.

"If we get this right, it may help to mitigate some of the impact resulting from the potential decoupling of supply chains and bifurcation of technology arising from the US-China rivalries. We need to be prepared and to look ahead," she said.

When asked for her views on how both countries have resolved issues amicably over the years, Madam Halimah said that between two close neighbours, differences will inevitably arise from time to time.

"What is important is that we do not allow any one issue to mar or derail our overall relationship. Given the much broader relationship and interlinkages that we

have, both sides stand to gain much more when we work pragmatically and calmly to bridge our differences," she noted.

"Hence, I am glad that successive generations of Singaporean and Malaysian leaders have wisely found ways for us to widen our areas of convergence and reduce our areas of divergence, including isolating issues which are more appropriately resolved through third-party dispute settlement mechanisms," she added.

"This has been the mature way of dealing with our bilateral relationship, to constantly build and renew trust, honour prior agreements and understandings, and always look for new and mutually beneficial things we can do together."

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