

M'sia as 2025 Asean chair will breathe new life into forums – Anwar

Malaysiakini

07 March 2024

Bernama

As chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) in 2025, Malaysia will attempt to breathe new life into Asean-led forums to achieve “something of consequence”, said Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim.

He said the forums will include the East Asia Summit, the Asean Regional Forum, and the Asean Defence Minister’s Meeting (ADMM)-Plus.

“The path ahead will not be easy. A degree of inertia has unfortunately set in, and there’s a deep-seated conservatism, an assumption that little can be done.

“But this is not the moment to be fainthearted. I believe that, with enough will and support from our partners, we will be able to achieve something of consequence,” he said.

Anwar was giving a public lecture called the Gareth Evans Oration at the Australian National University in Canberra today. Titled “Navigating Geopolitical Currents: Malaysia and Australia’s pivotal role in Asia Pacific”, it was attended by

over 500 students.

He said there is bound to be cynicism about the value of Asean in a more divided region, but it is precisely when chasms are growing that the world needs to double down on Asean.

“Without it, the region will be principally dictated by the calculations and designs of the major powers, unfettered by the need to account for a more diverse range of interests and viewpoints,” he said.

Anwar said that for Malaysia, Asean acts as a multiplier, an indispensable platform for the countries of Southeast Asia to exercise their agency.

“Irrelevance, decay, or reversal are not acceptable options. Asean’s advancement is at the core of our strategic interests,” he pointed out.

Climate change

Meanwhile, in terms of reducing carbon footprint, Anwar said Australia, Malaysia, and Asean countries must strategise to adapt to rising sea levels, heat waves, and disrupted water cycles to enhance climate resilience while safeguarding investments in low-carbon transitions.

“Now, as reducing emissions is only one side of the coin, planning to adapt to the impacts of climate change is therefore imperative,” he said.

He said Malaysia, being an oil and gas producing nation, is dedicated to achieving net-zero emissions by as early as 2050 and fulfilling its commitment to the Paris Agreement, although the country contributed less than one per cent to global greenhouse gas emissions.

“We have set ambitious targets to support the energy transition, including a 70 percent share of renewable electricity capacity by 2050, a substantial increase from the current level of 25 percent,” said Anwar.

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Source: <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/698578>