

Remain united, don't let cracks in Asean be exploited, Anwar says

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Malaysia has urged Asean members to stay united in the face of rising tensions across the world.

Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, in making the call, said the association must send a clear message to the world that Asean will continue to drive regional peace, security, and cooperation.

“As global tensions continue to rise, and polarisation appears to prevail over integration, cracks and divisions within Asean run the risk of being exploited to the detriment of Asean centrality and cohesiveness,” he said.

He was speaking at the 44th Asean Summit plenary session in Vientiane, Laos, today.

As peace and stability are crucial for the region’s growth and prosperity, Anwar said Asean must also nurture relations with its partners.

He said Malaysia also encouraged Asean dialogue partners to manage their

differences to obtain positive outcomes.

Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim in Laos

“We cannot overstress the importance of dialogue and cooperation forming the fundamentals of amity and good relations,” he said.

On another note, Anwar said Malaysia looks forward to the adoption of the Asean Community Vision 2045 and its Strategic Plan at the 46th Asean Summit next year.

He said these documents will chart the region’s strategic pathways in years to come and reflect the hopes of its people for a peaceful and prosperous region that will contribute positively to global development.

“As Malaysia prepares to assume the chair of Asean, we commit to building a more inclusive and sustainable future for our region,” he said.

Asean summits

As the 10-member bloc celebrates the 10th anniversary of the Asean community next year, Anwar said it is the group’s conviction that it will be in a stronger position to face challenges and embrace opportunities.

Earlier in his speech, Anwar also welcomed his new counterparts from Singapore and Thailand, Lawrence Wong and Paetongtarn Shinawatra, to the Asean family.

The 44th and 45th Asean summits and related summits officially opened in the Laotian capital today and will run until Friday.

Anwar, who touched down last night, will also attend the Plus One Summits between Asean and its seven dialogue partners - Australia, China, Japan, India, South Korea, United States, and Canada, as well as the Asean Plus Three Summit, East Asia Summit, and Asean-United Nations Summit.

Other Asean leaders and dialogue partners, including Chinese Premier Li Qiang and United States Secretary of State Antony Blinken, are also expected to attend the summits.

At the closing ceremony of the summits, Laos as the current chair of Asean will symbolically hand over the Asean chairpersonship to Malaysia.

At the event, Anwar is scheduled to deliver short remarks outlining Malaysia's vision as chair of Asean.

Malaysia will officially assume the Asean chair on Jan 1, 2025.

- Bernama

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