

M'sia may be chair but Asean will work as one – Anwar

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Bernama

Malaysia may chair the Asean and Abac-Asean Caucus next year, but the 10-member bloc will work together under the concept of centrality, said Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim.

“We work together. There is no question about Indonesia taking over or Malaysia taking over. This arrangement is unique, and it is our duty to make sure that it works,” he said.

He was speaking at the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) Leaders Dialogue with the Apec Business Advisory Council (Abac).

He expressed appreciation to Abac for its unwavering commitment to promoting Asean-focused initiatives through the Abac-Asean Caucus.

This strategic platform, inaugurated by Abac Indonesia in November 2023 at the Apec Economic Leaders’ Week in San Francisco, United States, reflects Abac’s dedication to strengthen regional cooperation, foster economic unity, and drive

shared prosperity among Asean economies.

Also present were Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto, Minister of Investment, Trade, and Industry Tengku Zafrul Aziz, Abac chairperson Ruben Emir Gnanalingam as moderator, and Abac Indonesia chairperson Anindya Novyan Bakrie.

The Asean-Abac Caucus comprises seven Asean members - Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam, who are part of the Apec.

Anwar, who is in Lima, Peru, to participate in the Apec Economic Leaders Week (AELW), said the Asean-bloc remains unique as one of the most peaceful regions in the world, except for some minor issues with Myanmar.

“We are also the fastest-growing economy in the world. Therefore, we need to utilise available resources and collaborate as much as possible.”

The prime minister said the region should also tap into digitalisation’s advantages.

“In terms of food security and energy transition, we are all on the same page, and this is quite remarkable, and we tend to work together,” he said.

Besides this, Anwar said Asean should ensure the plight of the urban poor and the rural population are being alleviated so that inequality will not increase.

He also echoed Prabowo's call that Asean needs to do more to enhance business-to-business collaboration.

"And we are here as a government to help facilitate (the collaborations)," he added.

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