

Anwar: Asean's future not determined by China, US

SINGAPORE: Asean's future must not be determined by China or the United States, says PKR president Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, calling on members of the regional grouping to however maintain good ties with the two superpowers.

He said he did not believe that the trade war would adversely affect ties between Asean member countries as relations among them tended to be acceptable, although there were challenges.

"The best way forward for us (Asean) is to engage with both nations for our own survival and economic success.

"We need to maintain good cordial relations with both the East and the West," he said at a dialogue at the Milken Institute Asia Summit on Thursday.

The Port Dickson MP was asked about Asean's future as the regional grouping faces potential division due to the rivalry between Washington and Beijing.

Expressing his optimism, Anwar said there were opportunities and that "we have to look beyond the immediate problems and see whatever benefit we can obtain".

"I'm more optimistic if you can garner the best brains within the countries . . . with international support, we can drive this problem."

On the current haze situation, Anwar said: "We in Asean need to deal with the whole idea of governments.

"I'm optimistic because in the sense that you can get the governments in Asean to look at it. If they don't, then there must be a sense of outrage among the public because it is affecting millions of people."

Anwar stressed that the three affected countries - Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore - must partly shoulder the responsibility and "do something".

"It is not a blame game between (the three countries) ... some say Indonesia's at fault but Malaysia's companies are involved and Singapore has a lot of shares there."

He also expressed his hope that the companies involved be held accountable for their actions. —
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