

# A year on, reflections abound on Anwar's impactful leadership

**KUALA LUMPUR:** As Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim marks his first year in office today, reflections abound on his impactful leadership.

These include comments from Indonesia about the deepening connections between Malaysia and our neighbours.

Ikatan Setiakawan Wartawan Indonesia-Malaysia (Iswami) president Asro Kamal Rokan, in a write-up, reflected on the blossoming camaraderie between the two countries, saying Anwar's first year in office "resonated not only within Malaysia, but also across the Indonesian archipelago".

"Indonesian national figures welcomed Anwar's ascension as the inauguration of a friend.

"This sentiment manifested during his maiden official state visit to Indonesia in January 2023, where he was warmly received by president Joko Widodo at the Bogor Palace."

Asro said Anwar's fluent Indonesian and compelling oratory captivated the audience.

"Anwar had expressed optimism in addressing economic instability, affirming his stalwart

belief in optimism over pessimism."

He also noted that Anwar's emotional closeness to Indonesia stemmed from decades of association, notably rooted in his younger days.

"His involvement with the Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam in Pekalongan, Central Java, forged friendships with Indonesian activists and Islamic intellectuals like Nurcholish Madjid, Fahmi Idris, Mar'ie Muhammad and Ekky Syahrudin, from whom he gleaned ideological and political insights.

"In early September 2023, before attending the Asean High-Level Conference in Jakarta, he met Islamic figures, including (Muhammadiyah chairman) Haedar Nashir, (Islamic Propagation Council of Indonesia chairman) Adian Husaini, (former Muhammadiyah chairman) Din Syamuddin, and (Central Board of Nahdlatul Ulama's Muslimat chairman) Khofifah Indar Parawansa."

Asro also applauded Anwar's stance on media freedom, which he expressed during Malaysia's National Journalist Day in May.



*Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim mingling with guests at a thanksgiving ceremony for the Madani government's one-year anniversary in Putrajaya yesterday. PIC BY MOHD FADLI HAMZAH*

"It had garnered applause from senior journalists. He reiterated the government's commitment to a free media landscape, permitting criticism, while cautioning against incitement of hostility or religious tensions.

"As he marks his first year in office, Malaysia and Indonesia continue to deepen their ties, anchored not just in diplomatic rhetoric, but in the shared history and personal connections that bind the two nations.

"Anwar's vision for a cohesive, prosperous Southeast Asia remains steadfast, symbolising hope for collaborative progress in the region."

Iswami secretary-general N. Syamsuddin Ch Haesy, in his write-up, also commended Anwar's leadership.

"The story of Anwar Ibrahim's struggle shall remain preserved in the pages of his personal history and Malaysia's developmental history, which continues to grow as a modern nation, being the country with the second-largest Muslim population after Indonesia in Southeast Asia.

"He not only faces challenges in domestic politics — the logical consequence of forming a unity government — he also faces the challenges of civilisation amid rapid changes from the age of

script to the digital era: the era of artificial intelligence and Internet of things."

He said Anwar had to face the dynamics of the world's political and economic landscape post-Covid-19 pandemic, including global political instability due to the Ukraine-Russia war and Israel-Palestine conflict.

He added that Anwar was also confronted with the shift in geopolitical and geo-economic orientation from America-Europe to the Asia-Pacific as well as China's highly aggressive movements in the Asian region, significantly impacting Southeast Asia.