

Anwar speaks up

SAN FRANCISCO: The core values and importance of multilateralism, especially for emerging economies such as Malaysia and the need for humanity to prevail

beyond political alliances, were among the core messages that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim emphasised here.

His message on every platform here was simple and clear - the killing and atrocities in Gaza have to stop and there are no two ways about it.

Anwar, who was here for the 30th Apec Economic Leaders Meeting, also participated in the Apec CEO Summit and delivered a public lecture titled "Superpower rivalry and rising tensions in the Asia-Pacific: The view from Southeast Asia", at the University of California in Berkeley.

He said Malaysia unequivocally condemns the bombing of civilians, homes and hospitals and the consequential atrocities against innocent lives of children, women and men being carried out day and night in Gaza with impunity. The death toll in the ongoing crisis since Oct 7 has surged to 12,000.

> Prime minister raises issues linked to Gaza, emerging economies at Apec Leaders' Week

Apart from Malaysia, Brunei and Indonesia were the other two member economies, of the 21 members, that spoke on the conflict in the Middle East, Bernama reported.

In a landmark move, the three nations also decided to issue a separate statement at the end of Apec Leaders' Week, calling for a ceasefire in Gaza after Apec economies failed to reach a consensus on a paragraph proposed by the US on the geopolitical issue involving Russia and Ukraine, but not Gaza.

On the topic of trade and investment, Anwar, who is also finance minister, said Apec should remain a platform on which all nations come together to develop strategies that stimulate economic progress while maintaining the highest standards of cooperation and respect.

He said member economies, particularly

those that fall under the emerging category such as Malaysia, have benefited immensely from such collaboration in both trade and investment.

He said at various levels of growth and development, these economies are now trying to thrive over past adversities during the global health crisis, which means there needs to be more collaboration now than before.

"There is no doubt that the continued US-China rivalry will be the structural reality of world affairs, but emerging economies should not be pushed to take sides.

"Countries like Malaysia and Asean cannot be forced to see the world and big powers in the Cold War mindset," he said during a question and answer session at the Apec CEO Summit titled: "The Global Economy and State of The World".

For Putrajaya, he said the US has been a traditional ally and a major investor in Malaysia, but there has been a shift with increased trade and investment from China.

"Hence, Beijing will remain central to regional affairs due to its size, proximity and deep linkages with Southeast Asia.

"As China's economy matures, it will shift emphasis from investment and exports towards domestic consumption and services," he said in his inaugural Apec meeting as prime minister.

He noted that the sheer scale of China's population ensures its enormous market will continue to grow in significance.

"These realities mean constructive relations with China remain essential, even as we balance America's enduring role."

Malaysia still sees value in engaging both Washington and Beijing, he added.

Anwar also took the opportunity to share Malaysia's priorities and principles under the Madani Economy Framework, emphasising inclusivity, sustainable development and cooperation for shared prosperity at the various meetings.