

PM: ASEAN, CHINA TIES BASED ON TRUST



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Each Asean member adopts a strong, independent stance, says Anwar

JAKARTA

THE relationship between Asean and China relies on the trust that it shares with the economic giant, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim yesterday.

He said this formed the foundation of its relations because each Asean member adopted a strong and independent stance when it came to protecting its interest and the interest of the bloc. He said this in a speech at the 26th Asean-China Summit held in conjunction with the 43rd Asean Summit and Related Summits here.

He said China and Asean should also continue to maintain multilateral dialogue platforms in areas of security as the region's stability was of utmost importance.

"Under China's leadership, innovation technology and technical education have transformed China, and this has benefited us.

"This is not just about government-initiated programmes, but also people-to-people interests since 2024 will be the year of China-Asean Cultural and People-to-People Exchanges.

"I would also like to stress on the Asean-China Summit chairman and Premier Li Qiang that future collaboration would depend largely on the issue of trust and discussions at multilateral levels in areas of security for China and Asean.

"As I relayed to (Chinese) Premier Li Qiang earlier, we take a strong independent stance as far as protecting our country's inter-



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim following the proceedings at the 6th Asean-China Summit held in conjunction with the 43rd Asean Summit and Related Summits in Jakarta yesterday. AFP PIC

ests and the interests of the region.

"I am pleased with the policy pronouncements and arrangements of Chinese President Xi Jinping, and I have also shared in a small way (Malaysia's) Madani Economy Framework."

He said collaborations in food security and digital transformation could be boosted under the Asean-China Free Trade Agreement 3.0.

He said in this regard, the Asean-China Technical Cooperative Agreement could identify new collaborative programmes in these sectors. He is leading the Malaysian delegation to the summit here until today.

Under Asean's platform with its dialogue partners, the bloc annually meets with heads of government from China, India, Japan, South Korea, United States, Canada, Australia as well as representatives from the United Nations.

Meanwhile, Bernama reported that Anwar, in *Program Temu Anwar* on Tuesday night, had urged the younger generations to adopt the narratives of preserving culture, patriotism and maturity.

He said the young generation in Malaysia and Indonesia needed to be wise when seeking similarities to avoid differences.

Differences, he said, was something that could not be avoided, but could be handled with care to avoid leading to a split among the people of both countries.

"There must be clarity and maturity because it can bring about

huge benefits to Malaysia and Indonesia."

He said the people of both countries did not have any problem unless some self-centred politicians caused unnecessary issues.

"Small issues are blown up to gain support whereas people in the region have the same historic background, but separated by the colonisation of the Portuguese, Dutch and English.

"So why must we adopt an improper attitude to erase history just for the benefit of some?"

He cited a number of incidents like raising the issue of the *Rasa Sayang* song, which originated from the Malay region, just like batik with its own uniqueness and beauty.

"So if there are those who are keen to discuss the issue of culture, the most important quality is humanity and coupled with love for each other, moral values.

"But these are values that we have left behind."

Speaking about Indonesian workers in Malaysia, he said there were weaknesses in a number of cases where they were abused, but added that action had been taken against those involved.

"However, a few cases do not represent the population of Malaysia. Whether such cases involve Indonesians or Malaysians, they will go through the legal process."

"Temu Anwar Program", a dialogue between Anwar and youth, was held for the first time outside the country.