

A packed schedule for Anwar

PM to attend summit to discuss regional stability, economy and food security

By RAHIMY RAHIM
rahimyr@thestar.com.my

JAKARTA: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim is set to have a packed schedule as he leads a high-level delegation to the 43rd Asean Summit and related meetings here.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir said the Prime Minister, who will arrive here today, is expected to attend at least 11 meetings with heads of government and leaders of world bodies, including US Vice-President Kamala Harris, Chinese Premier Li Qiang, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese.

The summit, according to Zambry, is expected to discuss various issues, including strengthening bilateral ties and regional stability, boosting the economy, and improving food security.

"During the Prime Minister's visit to Indonesia, based on his current schedule, his itinerary will be packed.

"The Prime Minister has expressed his intentions to make

full use of his time to enhance ties between Malaysia and other countries.

"This is the perfect opportunity for Malaysia to do this with those who are attending the summit," he told a press conference here yesterday.

Observers are looking forward to the summit between Asean nations and China.

The 43rd Asean Summit starts tomorrow and runs until Thursday.

The Asean Indo-Pacific Forum (AIPF), the summit's flagship event, will be held tomorrow.

On Wednesday, Asean will hold talks with its dialogue partners, including China, South Korea, Japan, the United States and Canada respectively.

Wednesday's agenda includes an Asean Plus Three (APT) Summit.

The APT is an economic cooperation that encompasses the 10 Asean member states, Japan, China and South Korea.

During this visit, Anwar will be accompanied by Zambry and Investment, Trade and Industry Minister Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz, as well as

other government officials.

Zambry said Anwar is also expected to meet with the Malaysian diaspora, youths and a group of social media influencers here during his visit.

He said the Asean meeting with China will not only focus on one issue, which is the controversial new China map.

He said it is important to handle issues in a diplomatic manner and ensure that there will be a joint resolution between all related parties.

"We will not be bringing up only one issue. This summit is a platform for relationships, which we view in a wider context.

"We will put forward ways to resolve (the matter) through the efforts of Asean and the relevant countries that are partners of Asean," he added.

Zambry said the discussions will be based on aspects "that have been jointly agreed upon" for the member nations to achieve resolution if there is conflict.

"Certainly, there will be priority issues that will be given attention, whether it is with China or in the context of the relationship with America or Korea, and also rela-

tionships with other strategic partner nations like India, Japan and so on," he added.

It was reported that Malaysia will issue a protest note to China over its maritime claims in the "China Standard Map Edition 2023".

Zambry, however, did not indicate when the note would be handed over to China.

China's Natural Resources Ministry issued the "China Standard Map Edition 2023", which also covers the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) maritime areas of Malaysia near Sabah and Sarawak, Brunei, the Philippines, Indonesia and Vietnam, as well as several areas in India.

Wisma Putra also said in the statement that the map holds no legal or binding authority over Malaysia.

Pressed on whether the question of China's new map will significantly impact the summit, he said the matter will be looked into from all angles.

"In the context of Asean and China, this will be its 26th meeting with China. In terms of the issues that we are facing, we will not focus just on one issue

alone," he added.

Meanwhile, Anwar will also share the government's Malaysia Madani vision in various areas in a bid to enhance the concept of Asean centrality.

"We believe that part of his (Anwar's) intervention will be on his vision and mission on Malaysia Madani.

"This encompasses the need for countries to work and cooperate with each other and to emphasise the importance of Asean centrality," Zambry said.

Other issues that are expected to be discussed are issues on the global supply chain, bilateral trade, the development of the electric vehicle market, border security issues and Asean solidarity.

"We need to address the global supply chain issue as we are living in an open economy.

"As such, we are obliged as a regional association to act in a more cohesive manner.

"Asean must be protected amidst the global economic crisis.

"I believe in the spirit of Asean, and this spirit will continue to reverberate throughout our meeting this time around," he said.