

PM: ASIAN NATIONS MUST STAND TOGETHER



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We can work for a peaceful, prosperous continent, says Anwar

TOKYO

DATUK Seri Anwar Ibrahim has called on Asian countries to work together to ensure a “peaceful, stable and prosperous” continent.

In his keynote address at the 29th Nikkei Forum Future of Asia here, he pledged Malaysia’s solidarity, support and openness to collaborating with other countries in Asia.

“We must stand together, allowing neither external forces nor insidious competition to pull us away from the larger goal... nothing less than a peaceful, stable, and prosperous Asia.”

This was his first keynote address as prime minister at the annual event, which brings together movers and shakers from Asia Pacific to discuss the region’s role on the global stage. The forum’s theme is “Asian Leadership in an Uncertain World”.

He reflected on the challenges facing the world, including rising protectionism and closed alliances.

“Trade, investment, and the sharing of technologies have been increasingly weaponised by world powers as they compete with each other, largely to the detriment of developing countries.

“Even as much has changed, some constants remain, such as the centrality of global economic challenges and the ever-looming spectre of uncertainty.

“Deep-seated anxieties that reach far into the borders and social fabric of nations continue to fester while economic dispari-



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim giving his keynote address at the 29th Nikkei Forum Future of Asia in Tokyo, Japan, yesterday.
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ties, rapid technological change and environmental degradation persist to muddy our collective future.”

Anwar said Asia had, in recent years, shown what could be achieved through cooperation, citing the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and the Comprehensive Partnership for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

He said Malaysia, which assumes the Asean chairmanship next year, was committed to championing cooperation between countries.

On another matter, he said Malaysia was a safe haven for investments.

He said investors, particularly those in the manufacturing sector, were looking for a safe haven amid brewing tensions around the world.

“I dare say that Malaysia fits the bill (of a safe haven), thanks to our stability, skilled labour force, and our economic and geopolitical nonalignment.

“The proof is in the numbers. In 2023, the state of Penang, Malaysia’s semiconductor hub, attracted US\$13 billion in foreign direct investment, exceeding the total for the previous seven years combined.”

He said economic policymaking in the 2020s could not be divorced from three global megatrends: geopolitics, digitalisation and climate change.

“Hence, Malaysia recently unveiled three key policy frameworks to provide greater certainty, clarity and transparency on

the future of the economy.”

The first of these, he said, was the Madani Economy framework, which outlined strategies to drive sustainable and inclusive development, said Anwar.

“The second major policy that Malaysia has introduced is the New Industrial Master Plan 2030, which represents a whole-of-government approach to industrial policy.”

The success of this plan, he said, would take Malaysia a step closer to achieving high-income status by the decade’s end.

“Finally, the National Energy Transition Roadmap is Malaysia’s strategy to ensure the country meets its commitment to achieving net-zero emissions as early as 2050.”

He also paid tribute to Japan.

“Active Japanese FDI has been a crucial factor in the success of Malaysia’s semiconductor industry, and this is true even today, with large-scale investments coming from Kaga Electronics and Ferrotec.”

Malaysia’s relationship with Japan had grown from strength to strength, said Anwar, citing the meeting held in December with Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida where bilateral ties were upgraded to a comprehensive strategic partnership.

“Japan and Malaysia share a common vision for Asia’s future based on stability, connectivity and cooperation in support of a rules-based order, and I am confident that our relations will only grow from strength to strength from now on.”