

Reject overtures that cause division

We must stand for regional peace, security and cooperation, PM tells Asean nations



Strong united front: (From left) Myanmar's Permanent Secretary of Foreign Affairs Aung Kyaw Moe, Marcos Jr, Wong, Paetongtarn, Pham, Siphandone, Anwar, Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet, Ma'ruf Amin and Gusmao standing hand-in-hand during a photocall of Asean leaders at the 44th Asean Summit (Plenary Session) at the National Convention Centre in Vientiane. — Bernama

VIENTIANE: Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim took the Asean platform to call on member nations to show unity and promote cooperation, peace and security in the region amid an increasingly divided world.

He urged all 10-Asean member states to reject any attempts that could sow division from within.

In making the call, the Prime Minister said in this vein, Asean must be unflinching and resolute in sending a clear message to the world that the grouping is and must remain united, and will continue to be the key driver of regional peace, security and cooperation.

"As global tensions continue to rise and polarisation appears to prevail over integration, cracks and division within Asean run the risk of being exploited, to the detriment of Asean centrality

TARRENCE TAN
in Vientiane
tarrence
@thestar.com.my



and cohesiveness.

"Hence, it behooves us, Asean member states, to reject overtures that are predisposed to cause division," said Anwar in his remarks at the plenary session of the 44th and 45th Asean Summits yesterday.

As much as peace and stability are crucial for the region's continued growth and prosperity, the Prime Minister said it is imperative that the regional grouping continue to nurture and consolidate relations with its dialogue and external partners.

"We cannot over-stress the importance of dialogue and cooperation forming the fundamentals of amity and good relations.

"Therefore, we encourage our dialogue partners to manage their differences in order to obtain positive outcomes," he said at the closed-door session.

On Timor-Leste's inclusion as a full member of Asean, the Prime Minister said Malaysia believes that the move would bode well for the regional bloc.

"Malaysia looks forward to the recommendations from our senior officials on measures to facilitate Timor-Leste's early full membership into Asean," he added.

Malaysia, said the Prime Minister, looks forward to the adoption of the Asean Community Vision 2045 and its Strategic Plan at the 46th Asean Summit next year.

He said these documents will chart the region's strategic pathways in years to come and reflect the hopes of its peoples for a peaceful, stable and prosperous region that will contribute positively to global development.

"As Malaysia prepares to assume the Chair of Asean, we commit to building a more inclusive and sustainable future for our region," he said.

The 44th and 45th Asean Summit and Related Summits kicked off with Laos Prime Minister Sonexay Siphandone and wife welcoming Asean leaders at the National Convention Centre (NCC) in Vientiane.

Among those present were Sultan of Brunei Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, Laos President Thongloun Sisoulith, Thailand Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra and Indonesian Vice

President Ma'ruf Amin.

Others were Singapore Prime Minister Lawrence Wong, Philippine President Ferdinand Romualdez Marcos Jr, Timor-Leste Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao and Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh.

The Prime Minister also attended the Asean Leaders' Interface with representatives of Asean Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (Aipa) and also held a closed-door bilateral meetings with Wong and Gusmao.

At night, Anwar attended a dinner hosted by the Malaysian ambassador to Laos Edi Irwan Mahmud at the Rumah Malaysia.