



(From left) Vietnam Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh, Laos President Thongloun Siphandone, Laos President Thongloun Sisoulith, Anwar and Sultan of Brunei Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah posing for photos at the summit in Vientiane yesterday. - AFP/IC

Malaysia outlines several strategies for Asean

> Bloc needs to redraw and secure regional supply chain and linkages to global economy, says Anwar

VIENTIANE: Malaysia has outlined three strategies for Asean when it takes over the grouping's chairmanship in 2025, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He said these include bolstering regional value chains and regulatory cooperation, strengthening member countries' fundamentals, and reinventing, restructuring and recalibrating their economies while leveraging one another's strengths.

Addressing the 44th Asean Summit Plenary Session yesterday, he said this is crucial to expand trade and investment linkages as well as to foster digital transformation in the region.

"(Asean) needs to redraw and secure the regional supply chain and its linkages to the global economy.

"I believe that if we pursue this course with determination and commitment, Asean can achieve economic resilience and be on track to become the fourth largest economy by 2030."

Anwar was the second leader to speak after Laos Prime Minister Sonexay Siphandone at

the plenary session. All the leaders from Asean's 10 member countries attended the session held at the National Convention Centre here.

He said intra-Asean trade has remained low for the past few decades despite the phenomenal economic growth experienced in Southeast Asia.

"I believe there is vast potential for enhancement in this regard, particularly so with the upgrading of the Asean Trade in Goods Agreement to be signed in 2025."

He also said it is imperative for Asean to explore and broaden the grouping's economic partnerships beyond the region's borders.

"Malaysia's proposal for the Asean Gulf Cooperation Council and China Summit in 2025 is aimed at achieving exactly this. I would like to thank Asean member states for supporting this proposal."

Commenting on Timor-Leste's impending inclusion into the grouping, Anwar said the move would expand the region's economy and contribute to making Asean a more

economically resilient bloc, putting it on track to become the world's fourth-largest economy by 2030.

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

Timor-Leste was granted official observer status and received in-principle approval to become a member of Asean during the 40th and 41st Asean Summits in Cambodia in 2022.

The 44th and 45th Asean Summits and related summits officially opened in the Laos capital yesterday and will end tomorrow, Bernama reported.

Anwar, who arrived here on Tuesday night, will also attend the Plus One Summits between Asean and seven dialogue partners, namely Australia, China, Japan, India, South Korea, United States and Canada, as well as the Asean Plus Three Summit, East Asia Summit and Asean-United Nations Summit.

Other Asean leaders and dialogue partners, including Chinese Premier Li Qiang and United States Secretary of State Antony Blinken, are also expected to attend the summits.

The summits will conclude tomorrow, with Laos handing over the Asean chairmanship to Malaysia during the closing ceremony.