

A call for deepening strategic ties

Asean and China must unite for regional stability and growth, says Anwar

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PETALING JAYA: Asean and China must diversity their trade and investment strategies to face geopolitical tensions and other challenges, says the Prime Minister.

Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said both sides should work together and focus on creating regional peace, prosperity and stability while strengthening bilateral and multilateral relations.

He said China has remained Malaysia's largest trading partner for 15 consecutive years, with the global economic superpower also being Asean's largest trading partner for 14 consecutive years.

"In 2020, Asean became China's largest trading partner.

"In 2023, China-Asean bilateral trade' reached nearly US\$697bil, with China's direct investment in Asean exceeding US\$17bil, making it the third-largest investor in the region," he said in a video address during the opening of the 21st China-Asean Expo and China-Asean Business and Investment Summit in Nanning on Tuesday, *Sin Chew Daily* reported.

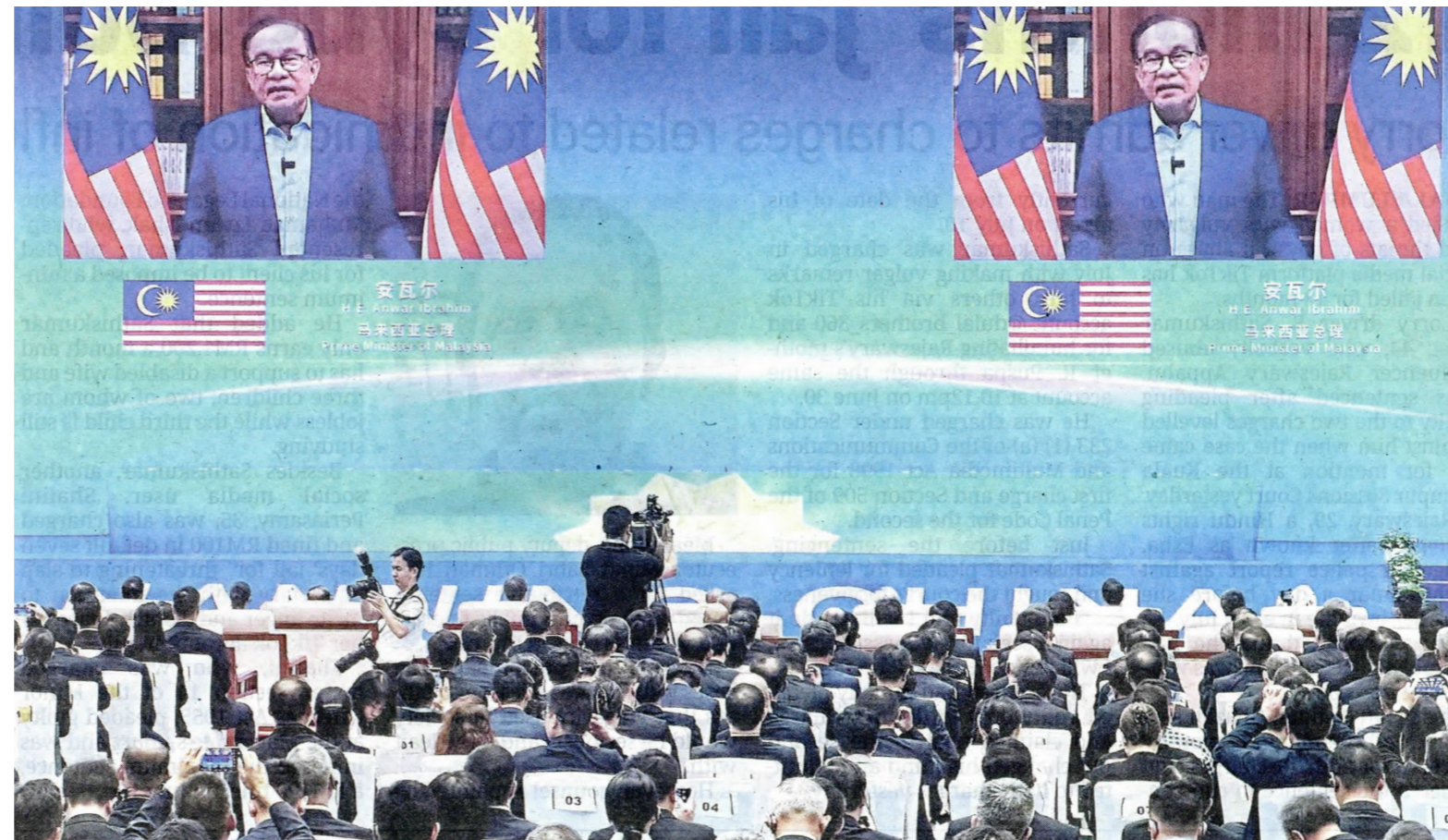
Malaysia is the key participant of this year's expo with its pavilion having 150 participants, including 10 departments and government agencies as well as three trade associations.

The pavilion showcases Malaysia's strategic industries, including manufacturing, agriculture and technology.

Anwar said the latest edition of the expo and summit held a special significance for Malaysia as it coincided with the 50th anniversary of Malaysia-China diplomatic relations.

He recalled the visit of China's Premier Li Qiang to Malaysia in June, highlighting the strengthening of the bilateral relationship and the shared commitment to deepen economic cooperation.

He said the recent meeting in Beijing between His Majesty Sultan Ibrahim, King of Malaysia, and Chinese President Xi Jinping was a proud and historic moment



Rapt attention: Audience listening to Anwar's video address during the opening of the 21st China-Asean Expo and China-Asean Business and Investment Summit in Nanning. (Left) Performers dressed in traditional attires performing at the summit.

for both sides.

"This anniversary offers us a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to enhance the vitality and resilience of our economic relations," he added.

Transport Minister Anthony Loke, who is representing the Malaysian government at the ongoing event which closes on

Saturday, reiterated Malaysia's firm commitment to the strengthening of trade ties between China and Asean, adding that the country's strong presence in the expo clearly demonstrated this.

He said Chinese Vice Premier Ding Xuexiang's visit to the Malaysian Pavilion reflected the importance of Malaysia-China

relations and their shared commitment to promoting regional economic cooperation.

Ding described the long-standing friendly relationship between China and Asean as that of good neighbours, friends and partners.

He said China and Asean have always advanced together,

becoming the most successful and dynamic example of regional cooperation in the Asia-Pacific.

"We are willing to continue to uphold the concept of sincerity, affection, benefit and inclusiveness, and work with Asean countries to deepen practical cooperation and write a new chapter in building a closer China-Asean community with a shared future," he said.

Association of Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry Malaysia president Tan Sri Low Kian Chuan, who led a delegation to participate in the expo, will speak in one of the forums.