



Anwar paying a courtesy call on Communist Party of Vietnam General Secretary To Lam in Hanoi yesterday. - **BERNAMAPIC**

Asean needs robust, resilient supply chain ecosystem: PM

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KUALA LUMPUR: Asean must build a robust and resilient supply chain ecosystem within the region, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim in a keynote address at the Asean Future Forum 2025 in Hanoi, Vietnam yesterday.

He said this is necessary to withstand looming geopolitical challenges such as the recent tariffs imposed by the United States and counter-tariffs by those on the receiving end.

"While some might argue that Asean could benefit as global supply chains recalibrate and seek diversification, the reality is far more complex. The question remains - can Asean truly capitalise on these shifts, or will we be caught in the crossfire of great power rivalry?"

"In either case, we must ensure that any gains from investment and trade be distributed equitably among our member states and not exacerbate existing disparities," he said at the forum organised by Vietnam's Foreign Affairs Ministry titled "Building a United, Inclusive and Resilient Asean Amidst

Global Transformation."

Calling it an era of rivalry and division, he said the 10-member bloc must adopt a new model of trade integration that aligns with global trends towards environmental sustainability.

"The economic developmental gap across our region is stark, where, for example, the GDP per capita of some Asean members are more than 34 times that of others, a challenge we must collectively address. We must commit to ensuring that no nation within Asean is left behind in the pursuit of economic growth."

Anwar said Asean stands on the precipice of renewal and transformation, underpinned by a vision of shared progress, prosperity and justice.

He said it is no longer a bystander in global affairs but a dynamic and influential force driving positive change.

"And I could not agree more with Chinh (Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh), when he described Asean as a region

of "incredible vitality"

Anwar added that markets in developed nations are increasingly prioritising sustainability, and Asean must adapt to such trends to maintain its relevance in global trade.

"This calls for measuring, reporting and verifying the environmental footprint of products that cross our borders. Such initiatives will not only enhance our trade competitiveness but also encourage greater private sector investment in green economy transformations."

He said Asean must remain cautious of possible over-dependence on any one market or industry which could leave the region vulnerable to external shocks, Bernama reported.

"Asean's strength lies in its ability to unify, gel together through dialogue and act as a cohesive economic bloc, leveraging its collective potential to navigate future uncertainties. Given the present and future realities that we face, Malaysia has adopted the theme of 'Inclusivity and Sustainability' with a deliberate view towards a future-oriented network."

Earlier, Anwar held a breakfast meeting with his Vietnamese counterpart and revealed that this is his first working visit to Vietnam since Malaysia assumed the Asean chairmanship for 2025.