

## ASEAN CHAIRMANSHIP

# PM: UNITY KEY TO MALAYSIA'S EXCELLENCE

Country must strengthen governance, get rid of graft to earn respect, says Anwar

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**M**ALAYSIA must collectively embrace the principle of striving for excellence by first strengthening national unity, as it assumes the Asean chairmanship in 2025.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, said Malaysia must be well-organised, with strength-

ened governance and the eradication of leakages and corruption, before venturing into regional and international markets.

He said only by taking such measures could Malaysia earn respect as a sovereign, independent and responsible nation.

"The complexities of the current global landscape demand Asean to carve new roles and directions.

"This certainly is a significant task for Malaysia as it leads Asean this year under the theme 'Inclusivity and Sustainability', which is to mobilise all available strengths and teams as a unified whole, ensuring that development remains sustainable while addressing disparities and tackling issues faced by the marginalised and poor communities.

"This is what we mean for Asean to share the fruits of pros-

perity equitably, without any group or region being left behind," he said in his New Year message, aired last night.

Describing Malaysia's Asean chairmanship as a great honour, Anwar said the role presented an opportunity for Malaysia to forge a new chapter in regional and global agendas, which remained challenging.

"This includes fundamental issues such as massacres, oppression, injustices and colonisation in Gaza and other affected areas."

Malaysia will officially assume the Asean chairmanship today, after Laos handed over the responsibility during the 44th and 45th Asean Summits in Vientiane on Oct 11 last year.

With the theme of "Inclusivity and Sustainability", Malaysia will host more than 300 Asean meetings and summits throughout the



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year, including the Asean Economic Ministers' Retreat in Johor, the Asean Foreign Ministers' Meeting and Post-Ministerial Conference in Kuala Lumpur and

the 47th Asean Summit in Kuala Lumpur.

Malaysia previously chaired Asean in 1977, 1997, 2005 and 2015.