

# MALAYSIA, SINGAPORE SEEK WIN-WIN SOLUTION

**Maritime boundaries, airspace and water agreements on the agenda as leaders resume discussions**

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**M**ALAYSIA and Singapore have resumed discussions on long-standing bilateral is-

sues, including maritime boundaries, airspace and water supply.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim acknowledged the complexity of these issues and emphasised the importance of a holistic and comprehensive approach to addressing them.

He said technical teams from both countries would discuss the relevant parameters.

"These are complex issues. And our position, as the prime minister (Singaporean Prime Minister Lawrence Wong) said, all demands, both from Singapore and Malaysia, should be fully considered and the final settlement should be a win-win solution.

"We can expand these discussions further because they have been ongoing for the last few decades. I don't think we should wait for the new decades to come, not necessarily in next year's retreat," he said during a joint press conference with Wong.

Anwar said long-standing issues should not disrupt the stance of both countries on key areas such as economy, energy, digital transformation, investment and trade.

"We agree that we should hold brief meetings to review these matters, enabling our technical teams and experts to address them promptly."

Wong said progress had been made, but emphasised that the issues remained complex and not yet fully resolved.

"While we would like the resolution to be swift, it's also crucial that we allow enough time for officials to meet, communicate and understand each other's positions.

"This will enable us to reach an agreement and outcome that is durable and beneficial for both sides."

Wong said he and Anwar were fully committed to ensuring the



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim welcoming Singaporean Prime Minister Lawrence Wong in Putrajaya yesterday. NSTP PIC BY MOHD FADLI HAMZAH

discussions were conducted in good faith, constructively and holistically.

"Our goal is to ensure that these outstanding issues do not detract from the overall strength of our relationship."

He said he did not want these issues to overshadow the positive projects both countries could undertake together.

"However, we are fully committed to discussing these issues constructively and holistically. I am confident that, in time, we will reach durable and mutually beneficial outcomes."

Wong said he believed the bilateral relationship between the two countries provided a crucial foundation and building block for a stronger Asean that could withstand geopolitical rivalries.

He said the relationship could be further advanced through Malaysia's chairmanship of Asean this year, focusing on strengthening linkages and promoting win-win cooperation.

"Singapore fully supports Malaysia's chairmanship of Asean. Now, more than ever, it is crucial for Asean to remain strong, integrated and united, as the greatest competition we face is not from within Asean, but from outside the region.

"Countries worldwide are now focused on anchoring major projects closer to their home economies, with big economies discussing reshoring, on-shoring and near-shoring.

"Asean must come together and explore ways to enhance our value proposition, ensuring we remain competitive as a bloc."

Wong highlighted the importance of both countries' commitment to key projects, such as the Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone and the Johor Baru-Singapore Rapid Transit System

Link, which are critical to fostering a more integrated Asean.

"When it comes to Asean, we're not just talking about increasing trade and investment linkages, but also infrastructure connections, including the Asean Power Grid.

"These are important projects that Singapore supports. And we hope that under Malaysia's leadership, we can make meaningful progress."

Anwar said both countries need to work together bilaterally and regionally to navigate the unpredictable global political landscape while complementing each other's strengths.

"Singapore has strengths with certain countries and we have ours with others. Why not work as a team to assist and complement one another?"

"Predicting the future is difficult, but at least we must take the necessary steps to strengthen our national and bilateral ties, and even more so with Asean.

"From my discussions with Asean leaders, I sense a renewed spirit. We must strengthen ourselves as a regional force to face the unpredictable pressures from other areas or groups. Collaboration, rather than division, is key."

He said Asean's focus should shift towards strengthening the Asean Power Grid, enhancing connectivity in the Asean digitalisation framework and improving intra-regional trade and investment, which has unfortunately been lacking.

"We have made progress in many areas and we should recognise the contributions of past leaders. However, the new focus must be on reinforcing our regional economic fundamentals and positioning ourselves strategically in response to new geopolitical demands and uncertainties."