



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim hosting a luncheon for Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto at Rumah Tangsi in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. BERNAMA PIC

## OFFICIAL VISIT

# INDONESIA TO HELP WITH ASEAN CHAIRMANSHIP

Anwar, Prabowo discuss bilateral ties, enhancing trade, investment and border cooperation

### SEPANG

**I**NDONESIA has pledged to assist and cooperate with Malaysia in its Asean chairmanship this year, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim yesterday.

Anwar, who is also finance minister, said this was conveyed by Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto during their closed-door meeting at a luncheon in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

"Prabowo's official visit is scheduled for Jan 27, but he felt the need to come earlier because we are longtime friends and we need to have a heart-to-heart discussion on issues of mutual interest.

"He wants to collaborate and help me in the Asean chairmanship," Anwar told a press conference after sending off Prabowo at the Bunga Raya Complex of the Kuala Lumpur International Airport after the latter concluded the one-day working visit.

Malaysia assumed the Asean chairmanship this month, with the theme "Inclusivity and Sustainability". Malaysia was also Asean chairman in 1977, 1997, 2005 and 2015.

Anwar said during the meeting, they discussed bilateral relations, particularly on enhancing trade relations, investment, border co-

operation and emerging issues.

"This meeting was more of an informal discussion. Both of us feel that more needs to be done to improve trade relations, investment, border cooperation and to resolve some outstanding issues."

The private luncheon hosted by Anwar at Rumah Tangsi was part of Prabowo's first working visit to Malaysia since assuming office last October.

After the luncheon, Anwar got into a car with Prabowo to head to the Bunga Raya Complex.

Prabowo's entourage included Indonesian Foreign Minister Sugiono.

"The visit reflects the special relationship between Malaysia and the Republic of Indonesia, underpinned by robust cooperation across various fields, including the economy, socio-culture, defence and security," Wisma Putra said yesterday.

Earlier, Anwar said 2025 would be a challenging year for Malaysia, stressing on the importance of strengthening regional cooperation to overcome emerging challenges.

"The year 2025 is shaping up to be a particularly demanding year for us. We are starting it with significant momentum," he said at the Malaysian Economic Forum 2025 yesterday.

He said Malaysia was enhancing its role within Southeast Asia, highlighting key initiatives such as the Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone, which will become a major economic hub.

"Together with Singapore's Prime Minister Lawrence Wong, we are launching a landmark project — the Johor-Singapore Spe-

cial Economic Zone. This will serve as a key growth hub for Johor, Singapore, and the region."

He pointed to Malaysia's strategic position to become a leader in sectors like oil and gas, semiconductors and Islamic finance.

"We are working to refine our expertise in oil and gas, semiconductors and Islamic finance so that we can position ourselves as global leaders in these fields."

He said Malaysia's open approach and neutral stance made the country an ideal partner for global and regional collaborations.

"Our neutrality and openness to partnerships are what make Malaysia a natural hub for all."

He addressed the importance of Asean prioritising critical issues, such as the crisis in Myanmar, to ensure the region remained stable and positioned as a leading economic bloc.

"This involves tackling complex issues, such as Myanmar, because the foundation for economic growth lies in peace, political stability, effective economic policies, private sector participation and efficient public sector governance."

Anwar said Asean's role was key in shaping the future global economy, adding that the region was poised to become the fourth largest economic bloc in the world. **Bernama**

*Page 1 pic: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim welcoming Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto upon his arrival for a private luncheon at Rumah Tangsi in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.*