

Asean's focus still on economic collaboration, says Anwar

KUALA LUMPUR: Enhanced regional trade and collaboration will be vital to realising Asean's 20-year vision, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

In response to a question from World Economic Forum (WEF) executive chairman Klaus Schwab about the potential for Asean to adopt a common currency and internal market similar to the European Union's, Anwar said strengthening economic

collaboration was important moving forward.

Anwar was speaking during a dialogue event at the WEF in Davos, Switzerland, yesterday.

"We have been successful in the past with geopolitical and diplomatic matters, but in my discussions with Asean leaders, I realised the need to enhance intra-Asean trade and work together to complement one another.

"The economic fundamentals,

particularly trade and investments, are crucial, as is how we negotiate with other countries," he said.

While recognising the lessons from the EU, the prime minister said Asean's focus would remain on economic collaboration rather than political integration.

"We can learn from the EU's successes and limitations.

"However, we are not overly concerned with political struc-

tures. Our priority is economic collaboration."

Anwar said discussions with Asean leaders, underscored the region's commitment to economic growth, particularly in areas such as digitalisation, energy transition and trade.

"Our main focus remains on strengthening economic fundamentals and ensuring sustained growth for Asean in the coming decades," he said.