

## ADAPTING TO TECHNOLOGY

# PM: OUR LAWS MUST KEEP UP WITH TECH

Leaders, big tech must collaborate to unlock Asean's potential, says Anwar

DAVOS (Switzerland)

**M**ALAYSIA cannot rely on outdated legislation to address the challenges posed by rapid technological advancements, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He said the country must pursue reforms to foster greater opportunities for international collaboration.

Anwar was speaking during a media briefing on "Unlocking Asean's Digital Future: Driving Inclusive Growth and Global Competitiveness" at the World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Summit 2025, here yesterday.

He said the government was committed to ensuring that legislation kept pace with global developments.

"We take all the latest pieces of legislation all over the world and adjust accordingly and push through. Fortunately, we have a two-thirds majority in Parliament. That helps immensely because people will see the array of things that we need to do to give meaning to effective collaboration and clarity of policies and effective fast-paced implementation," said Anwar.

The 30-minute session was moderated by the WEF Media Development and Planning head Dai Di.

When asked about unlocking Asean's potential, as the chairman for this year, Anwar said all leaders of member states must craft the correct policies, especially regarding the rapid advancement of new technology.

"As for the collaboration, as far as I'm concerned, it must (begin with) humility to acknowledge that these new technologies are challenging. We don't have all the answers, and, therefore, collaboration must begin with the key players, including companies, and the states."

Anwar said the task was not to impose prescriptions but to gather all the input to determine what needs to be done.

This included fostering an ecosystem encompassing airports, ports, infrastructure, centres of excellence, research and partnerships with universities.

He said collaboration among Asean leaders must extend to the private sector, as technological progress meant that governments and ruling elites recognise their limitations and adopt a co-operative approach to succeed.

Anwar also said digitalisation was a "missing component" in all of Malaysia's previous free trade agreements (FTAs).

He said digital transformation was one of the priorities of Asean and that Malaysia was also seeking to upgrade its existing FTAs



Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim speaking at a media briefing during the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, yesterday. BERNAMA PIC

with digitalisation in mind.

Anwar, who is also finance minister, said as Asean undertook a digital transformation through artificial intelligence (AI), the urban-rural connectivity gap needed to be tackled.

"Our commitment is to make sure that this sort of transmission (Asean Power Grid or APG) and also the transformation of digitalisation would cover all areas and angles.

"If these two priorities are achieved, I think it would be a phenomenal feat for Asean as a region because as, as you know, it is relatively the most peaceful region in the world and the fastest-growing economy. But we have not given emphasis to substantive economic or technological collaboration," he said.

At a special one-on-one dialogue moderated by WEF founder and executive chairman Klaus Schwab, Anwar said Malaysia's political stability and clear policies in the Madani Economy framework encouraged big players in the AI and semiconductor industries to invest in the country, including big firms from the United States, Europe and China.

He called for a comprehensive approach to integrating AI into Malaysia's national framework, emphasising the urgency of establishing robust AI legislation, a national AI office, and data protection measures.

"It will have to come about, and we are pushing it at a faster pace, partly because of my age. I don't have time to wait."

Anwar also affirmed Malaysia's commitment to the Paris Agreement, saying the country was willing to take bold and tough measures to value humanity and preserve sustainability.

He said Malaysia, as a multiracial country, had not only demonstrated unity at home but also on regional platforms.

"Malaysia can showcase that we are a Muslim-majority nation, with a strong presence of ethnic Chinese and Indians, as well as tribal groups from Sabah and Sarawak, united as one great family.

"When it comes to climate change, it does not matter whether we are discussing the Paris Accord or international recognition; we must take action to protect our country and society." **Agencies**