

ANWAR MAKES LASTING IMPRESSION AT WEF

PM's capacity for balanced discourse underscores nation's unique position in global diplomacy

KUALA LUMPUR

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim made an indelible mark at the World Economic Forum (WEF) 2025 in Davos, Switzerland.

He seamlessly navigated discussions that ranged from light-hearted conversations about his favourite football club to the intricate dynamics of international relations and challenges and successes of regional integration.

His ability to balance the conversation in his engagements showcased Malaysia's unique position in global diplomacy, especially in dealing with countries with varying political ideologies and economic policies.

His first engagement at the WEF came from none other than Manchester United Football Club co-chairman Avram Glazer regarding Malaysia's goal for sports in future.

Anwar firstly replied that as a fan of the 147-year-old club, he still had hopes for Manchester United's resurgence and refused to change his preference despite the club languishing in the bottom half of the table and all his 14 grandchildren being Arsenal supporters.

Responding to Glazer's question during the "Country Strategy Dialogue" session on the sidelines of the WEF Annual Summit 2025, he pointed out the significance of sports in a multi-religious country like Malaysia and the importance of promoting it, not only as an industry but also to use the game to foster unity.

Anwar, who is also finance minister, addressed questions on the restructuring of Malaysia Airlines as well as improvements at Malaysia Airports Holdings Bhd, including aerotrain upgrades.

"I am impatient to get things going (at the airport) and (for it) to be more efficient. There's no reason why the airport should function as it did in the past, although it is relatively good compared with poorer airports. I



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim meeting Dutch Prime Minister Dick Schoof in Davos, Switzerland, on Wednesday. BERNAMA PIC

think there's room for improvement," he said.

Other topics Anwar touched on were healthcare, artificial intelligence, the Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone, upgrading the country's legislative, free trade agreements and the need for these agreements to include digitalisation, as well as Malaysia's views on nuclear energy.

On the last day of his three-day working visit to Davos to attend the summit, Anwar touched on the issue of Myanmar and how the failure of governance in the state has affected peace and security in Asean.

As Asean chair, Malaysia was cautiously optimistic about the progress in Myanmar, and it would coordinate efforts towards peace and security with the United Nations, he said at the Asean Plenary entitled "Even Stronger Together" here.

Anwar's ability to navigate various topics on multiple platforms with consistency showcased the great orator he is.

At every opportunity, he emphasised Malaysia's commitment to fostering cooperation among major powers, ultimately reinforcing Asean's role in addressing pressing economic and geopolitical challenges.

In his no-holds-barred remarks on issues faced by Asean and the region, especially concerning

tensions in the South China Sea, Anwar firmly stated any resolution on the matter must be a collaborative solution and not otherwise, regardless of the Western world's views on it.

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Prime minister

"And they say, 'Oh, are you being defensive?' No, it's not the case. I am simply stating the facts. Is there a problem? Yes, there is (a problem). But the issue involves the entire region. Are we going to wage war over it? No," he added.

He said these matters must not be approached defensively but with a firm commitment to dialogue, and Malaysia has been proactive in taking that path.

He said Malaysia had made significant strides in establishing itself as a trusted partner of China while recognising the United States as an equally important partner, as cumulatively, it remains the largest investor in Malaysia.

Anwar expressed optimism about Malaysia's ability to continuously attract investments and took every opportunity to promote the country to government and business leaders, as well as civil society officials attending the WEF. **Bernama**