

Reports by TEH ATHIRA YUSOF and KHOO GEK SAN

PM: All ministries on deck to make VM2026 a success

SEPANG: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has called for all hands to be on deck to ensure no states are left behind when promoting the country for a successful Visit Malaysia Year 2026 (VM2026) campaign.

Anwar said all ministries must focus on improving Malaysia's tourism, investment and economic potential while ensuring that no state is overlooked.

The VM2026 campaign aims to generate RM147.1bil in revenue and attract 35.6 million tourists - an ambitious yet achievable target, the Prime Minister said, with coordinated efforts from states and ministries.

"VM2026 represents a new approach to positioning Malaysia

as a premier tourist destination and marks the beginning of efforts to genuinely drive tourism growth across the country.

"I urge all ministries to focus on boosting Malaysia's tourism capabilities, as well as investment and economic opportunities, ensuring that no region or state is left behind," Anwar said when launching the event at Hangar 6 of the MAB Engineering Complex yesterday.

Anwar highlighted that the campaign aligns with the government's efforts to prepare all states as tourism destinations as Malaysia takes up the Asean chairmanship.

Achieving the target of 35.6 million tourists by 2026, he

noted, would significantly benefit sectors such as tourism, food and beverage, and related industries.

"Now, beyond these headline figures, our goal is clear: to promote tourism that is sustainable for our environment and communities, that acts as an engine of economic growth while providing meaningful and memorable experiences to our visitors," the Prime Minister added.

Anwar described Malaysia as more than an ordinary destination, emphasising its uniqueness as an environmentally friendly and sustainable destination with charming citizens who are multi-cultural and multiracial.

"This is of course aligned with

the Madani framework, the ethos of our national development, by championing sustainability concurrently with attainment of a higher quality of life and harmony between development and nature," he added.

Anwar also said the Tourism Ministry has been tasked with generating more money and bringing in more tourists to the country.

"The four themes under VM2026 are ecotourism and sustainability; modern attractions and innovations; cultural heritage and diversity; and the strength of our collaborations and partnerships," he said.

"So, the campaign has to proceed with the roadshows and fes-

tivals at minimum cost."

During the tabling of Budget 2025 on Oct 18 last year, Anwar announced that nearly RM550mil would be allocated to enhance tourism promotions and activities during VM2026.

This allocation covers the organisation of cultural activities and tourism events, improving flight access to Malaysia, and economic empowerment of communities through the arts, including promoting handicrafts and batik.

The Prime Minister also said that RM110mil would be allocated to enhance tourism areas, establish ecotourism partnerships, and support Unesco nominations.