

Together towards a stronger Asean

Indonesia vows to assist Malaysia's chairmanship and beef up bilateral ties

SEPANG: Indonesia, Asean's largest country and a fellow founding member of the regional grouping, has pledged to cooperate with Malaysia in its Asean chairmanship.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said this was conveyed by Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto during their closed-door meeting 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 also wants to collaborate and assist me in the Asean chairmanship," he told a press confer-

"Both of us feel that more needs to be done to improve trade relations, investment, border cooperation and to resolve some of the outstanding issues."

Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim

ence after sending off Prabowo following the conclusion of the Indonesian President's one-day working visit to Malaysia, Bernama reported.

Malaysia is Asean Chair for 2025, having been the chair in

1977, 1997, 2005 and 2015.

Asean was formed in 1967 with its initial membership comprising Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Singapore.

The grouping's membership

has since expanded to 10-member states.

Anwar said during his meeting with Prabowo, they discussed bilateral relations, particularly to enhance trade relations, investment, border cooperation and several emerging issues.

"The 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 of the outstanding issues," he said.

The Prime Minister had earlier hosted a private lunch for Prabowo at Rumah Tangsi.

This was Prabowo's first working visit to Malaysia since assuming office in October last year.

Also present in Prabowo's

entourage was Indonesia's Foreign Minister Sugiono.

Wisma Putra said Prabowo's visit reflects the special relationship between the two countries, supported by strong cooperation in various fields including economy, socio-culture, defence and security.

Indonesia is one of Malaysia's key trading partners, ranking as the seventh-largest globally and the third-largest among Asean member states in 2023.

Total trade between the two nations reached RM111.21bil last year.

Between January and October 2024, bilateral trade was valued at RM95.50bil, compared with RM94.37bil for the corresponding period in 2023.