

TRANSLATE TALK INTO ACTION

'ASEAN MUST UNITE AGAINST EXTERNAL PRESSURES'

NEW STRAITS TIMES 10 JUL 2025

PM urges bloc to confront 'tools' of geopolitical rivalry with clarity, conviction

KUALA LUMPUR

ASEAN must confront growing external pressures and geopolitical rivalries — including retaliatory United States tariffs — with clarity and conviction, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

In his keynote address at the 58th Asean Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM), Anwar said the region's unity must go beyond declarations and be reflected in its actions and resolve.

He urged Asean member states



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim (sixth from left) and Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan (seventh from left) with Asean ministers at the opening ceremony of the 58th Asean Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. NSTP PIC BY MOHAMAD SHAHRIL BADRI SAALI

to strengthen intra-regional trade and investment to build a more resilient economy.

"Across the world, tools once used to generate growth are now wielded to pressure, isolate and contain.

"Tariffs, export restrictions and investment barriers have become sharpened instruments of geopolitical rivalry.

"This is no passing storm — it is the new weather of our time. Asean must confront this reality with clarity and conviction.

Anwar, who is also finance minister, called for closer alignment between Asean's foreign

and economic policy tracks, where ministers must move in tandem in facing challenges — a move aligned with Asean's 2045 Vision for greater cross-sector synergy.

"To build a stronger, more connected Asean economy is a strategic imperative that will anchor our relevance and resilience for decades to come.

"We must also reject the idea that decisions about our region can be made elsewhere.

"Asean will not be spoken for in absentia.

"We are a region that charts its own course, deliberately, coher-

ently and with purpose."

Amid global uncertainty, Anwar stressed the urgency of practical collaboration in connectivity, food security, digital transformation, education, public health and climate resilience.

"These efforts take shape in the quiet determination of a vendor in Batambang, in the steady hands of a farmer in Central Luzon and in the dreams of a child in Chiang Rai.

"From Sittwe to Merauke, from Da Nang to Dili, Asean proves its worth, not in communiqués, but in outcomes that strengthen our region and serve our people."