

# TAP TRADE POTENTIAL, SAY ANWAR, PRABOWO

NEW STRAITS TIMES 28 JUN 2025

pg. 2

Leaders stress need for renewed focus on unlocking vast bilateral investment, trade opportunities

HAKIM MAHARI  
KUALA LUMPUR  
news@nst.com.my

**P**RIME Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto have called for renewed focus on unlocking the vast, yet under-utilised, potential in bilateral trade and investment between Malaysia and Indonesia.

Speaking at a joint press conference during his working visit to Jakarta, Anwar said despite close diplomatic ties and decades of cooperation, both countries have not fully capitalised on the many opportunities in key sectors.

“My friendship with Prabowo reflects the deep bonds between our nations.

“For nearly half a century, we have nurtured a close personal and familial relationship built on trust, mutual respect and a sincere spirit of brotherhood.

“The potential for greater economic cooperation is immense, particularly in trade and investment. However, we both agree that much of this capacity remains untapped.

“There is ample room for us to optimise this potential in the shared interest of our people and our longstanding friendship.”

He said both governments were aligned in their political will to advance cooperation in the economy, education, research, culture and investment.

“We recognise our shared responsibility to uplift the standing of our nations, whether through trade, education, innovation or cultural exchange.

“As President Prabowo mentioned earlier, these are all vital areas that have been discussed.

“I fully support the president’s call for pragmatic steps to enhance our country’s performance, especially in the face of tariff-related challenges and global uncertainties.

“We must strengthen our domestic foundations, while expanding bilateral and Asean-level



Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto welcoming Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim at the Halim Perdanakusuma International Airport in Jakarta yesterday. BERNAMA PIC

cooperation.”

Prabowo affirmed Indonesia’s commitment to working closely with Malaysia to build a more dynamic and mutually beneficial economic partnership.

“On the bilateral front, we have agreed to accelerate cooperation across all sectors, especially key areas such as the economy, trade, education and culture.

“These are issues both of us agree must be addressed promptly in the interest of something far greater — the enduring friendship and close cooperation between two countries that share so much in common.

“We have a shared history, similar cultures and many of our people practise the same faiths. These deep-rooted ties are a strong foundation for us to work from.”

Anwar’s official visit to Indonesia is part of the commitment by both nations to deepen close and longstanding bilateral relations at the highest leadership level. The visit was part of preparations for the 13th Annual Malaysia-Indonesia Consultation, set to take place later this year.

Anwar was accompanied by Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan, Investment, Trade and Industry Minister Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz, Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir, Communications Minister Datuk Fahmi Fadzil and Plantation and Commodities Minister Datuk Seri Johari Abdul Ghani.

Last year, Indonesia was Malaysia’s sixth-largest trading partner globally and the second-largest among Asean member states.

Bilateral trade increased by 4.5 per cent to RM116.29 billion, up from RM111.21 billion in 2023.

Anwar and Prabowo agreed to intensify efforts to resolve longstanding border and maritime issues, including those involving Sabah and the resource-rich Ambalat Block.

Anwar said both leaders acknowledged Sabah’s strategic role in shaping negotiations, particularly those on maritime boundaries and potential joint development initiatives in contested areas such as Ambalat.

He said both nations were committed to strengthening bilateral ties by addressing sensitive issues through mutual respect, established legal frameworks and diplomatic engagement.

“Both sides are making serious efforts to settle these issues in the spirit of close friendship and trust that has existed for nearly half a century.

“We also discussed the inclusion of Malaysian territories, particularly Sabah, in these bilateral engagements.

“I would like to express my appreciation for Indonesia’s continued loyalty and trust in strengthening this relationship, including taking into account Sabah’s views in maritime border discussions so that any agreements reached are fair and concluded more promptly.”

He said discussions touched on potential joint development initiatives to benefit communities in both countries, particularly those living near the border.

“While the issue of Ambalat may take time if pursued through traditional means, we have agreed that joint development could be a more productive and timely approach, providing immediate benefits for both nations and improving livelihoods along the frontier.”