



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim with Laos Prime Minister Sonexay Siphandone at Perdana Putra in Putrajaya yesterday. PIC FROM PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

SECOND PHASE

ANWAR: ACCELERATE ASEAN POWER GRID

He and Laotian PM also discuss port management, AI, rare earths

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has backed the fast-tracking of the second phase of the Asean Power Grid (APG), which aims to connect Laos, Cambodia and Thailand to Peninsular Malaysia and Singapore.

"I agree with (Laos) Prime Minister Sonexay Siphandone that we should fast-track the second phase to benefit Laos, Cambodia and Thailand... to connect to northern Malaya and Singapore," Anwar said, adding that the issue would be raised at the Asean Leaders' Retreat.

Anwar said this after holding a bilateral meeting with Siphandone.

He outlined other key initiatives discussed with his counterpart, including the Perlis Inland Port and Thanaleng Dry Port in Laos, which he said were progressing well and would be operational this year.

"We're expanding the facility and have signed a memorandum of understanding with Penang Port, ensuring that the flow of goods from Penang into Perlis



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and to the inland port in Thanaleng showcases a very important collaboration."

He also highlighted discussions on cooperation on port management, labour, digital development, artificial intelligence, semiconductor industries, rare earth and alternative energy.

This includes expanding the KTMB-Lao National Railway State Enterprise (LNRSE) memorandum of collaboration on the Asean Express train project, which aims to shorten travel time between member countries and China.

Anwar said he and his counterpart also discussed Timor-Leste's accession to Asean, which may take place by October, pending consensus from member states in the upcoming days.

The two leaders also discussed issues concerning Myanmar and the importance of continued humanitarian assistance, and called on all parties to respect the need for peace and a ceasefire, emphasising Asean's Five-Point Consensus.

Finally, Anwar confirmed plans for future working visits by the Laos prime minister to further boost bilateral ties and private sector collaboration.

Yesterday morning, Siphandone and his delegation were given an official welcome by Anwar and senior officials at Perdana Putra.

Accompanied by his wife, Vandara, Siphandone was greeted by cabinet ministers, Anwar's wife Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail and senior officials.

Upon arrival, Siphandone inspected a ceremonial guard of honour comprising 103 personnel and three officers from the 1st Battalion Royal Malay Regiment, led by Major Muhammad Fikri Senan.

This visit marks his inaugural trip to Malaysia.

Siphandone's visit precedes the 46th Asean Summit, the 2nd Asean-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Summit, and the Asean-GCC-China Summit in Kuala Lumpur.

Last year, bilateral trade between the two nations reached US\$21.9 million. Malaysia was Laos' fifth largest foreign investor, boasting US\$942 million in investments and 46 registered projects.