



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim welcoming Kuwait Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah at the 2nd Asean-Gulf Cooperation Council Summit in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. BERNAMA PIC

## INTERREGIONAL COOPERATION

# Anwar: Asean-GCC ties vital for sustainable prosperity

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The relationship between Asean and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is key to strengthening interregional collaboration, fostering resilience and ensuring sustainable prosperity.

Asean chairman and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said Asean and the GCC had the capacity and shared responsibility to be pillars of stability and drivers of future growth.

“Asean remains one of the most peaceful and economically vibrant regions in the world. Meanwhile, the GCC has made a remarkable transformation, from a perception rooted in a desert culture to a thriving, forward-looking region driven by advanced technologies, including digital innovation and artificial intelligence,” he said in his opening remarks of the 2nd Asean-GCC Summit yesterday.

“I believe that the Asean-GCC partnership has never been more vital than it is today, as we navigate an increasingly complex global environment marked by economic uncertainty and geopolitical challenges.

“A stronger Asean-GCC relationship will be key to enhancing interregional collaboration, building resilience and securing sustainable prosperity for our peoples.”

He said investments between the two regions continued to grow, reflecting increasing confidence in the long-term potential of the partnership.

Anwar said the combined GDP of Asean, the GCC and China of US\$24.87 trillion presented vast opportunities to synergise markets, deepen innovation and promote cross-regional investment.

“By deepening collaboration in these areas, we can build the foundation for growth that is

stable, resilient, and sustainable.

“In 2023, Asean’s GDP reached US\$3.8 trillion, making it the world’s fifth-largest economy. That same year, total trade with the GCC stood at US\$130.7 billion, with foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows of US\$390.2 million.

“China, meanwhile, remained Asean’s largest trading partner, with US\$696.7 billion in trade and US\$17.3 billion in FDI. These figures not only demonstrate robust existing linkages but also reveal considerable untapped potential.”

Anwar hoped the summit would mark a new chapter in Asean’s outward-facing engagement, exemplifying what could be achieved when nations collaborate with mutual respect and shared purpose.

He said ties between Asean, the GCC and China were historically rich and enduring, with long-standing connections through commerce, culture and the exchange of ideas.

“We have Makkah and Madinah — centres for millions of pilgrims — and trade hubs such as Oman, which historically served as key links through the region and GCC.

“Similarly, historic centres like Melaka exemplified this tradition, serving as strategic crossroads that linked East and West, demonstrating the power of openness, exchange and strategic connectivity.

“Today, Asean carries that legacy forward on a much broader scale, emerging as a dynamic intersection of global commerce, innovation, and opportunity.”

*Page 1 pic: Leaders from Asean, the Gulf Cooperation Council, China and Timor-Leste joining hands at the start of the Asean-GCC-China Summit in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.*