

# Support for Timor-Leste full membership in Asean

> Malaysia, Laos agree time to finalise accession process if consensus retained at meeting says Anwar

**PUTRAJAYA:** Malaysia and Laos have reiterated their strong support for Timor-Leste's full Asean membership, and called for intensified, inclusive efforts to address Myanmar's prolonged crisis.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said both countries agreed that it was time to finalise Timor-Leste's accession process (*see also Page 3*).

"We also discussed the accession of Timor-Leste, hopefully by October this year if we can retain a consensus in this meeting tomorrow (today), particularly during the following retreat," he said in a joint press conference with Lao Prime Minister Sonexay Siphandone at the Perdana Putra Complex

here yesterday.

Earlier, Anwar and Siphandone witnessed the exchange of a memorandum of cooperation between Penang Port Sdn Bhd and Thanaleng Dry Port.

The exchange was represented by MMC Port Holdings Sdn Bhd CEO Datuk Azman Shah Mohd Yusof and PTL Holding Co Ltd CEO Chanthone Siththixay.

On the situation in Myanmar, Anwar said the matter was also raised during his discussion with Siphandone.

"We discussed the need to continue humanitarian assistance, and also the need for all parties in Myanmar to respect the need for peace, immediate ceasefire, and try to work through the Asean mechanism and understanding, using the five-point consensus among Asean countries," he said.

Siphandone arrived in Malaysia yesterday to begin his first official visit ahead of the 46th Asean Summit and Related Meetings in Kuala Lumpur.

He was accorded an official welcoming ceremony by the prime minister at the Perdana Putra Complex, followed by a bilateral meeting.

Wisma Putra, in a statement, said this is

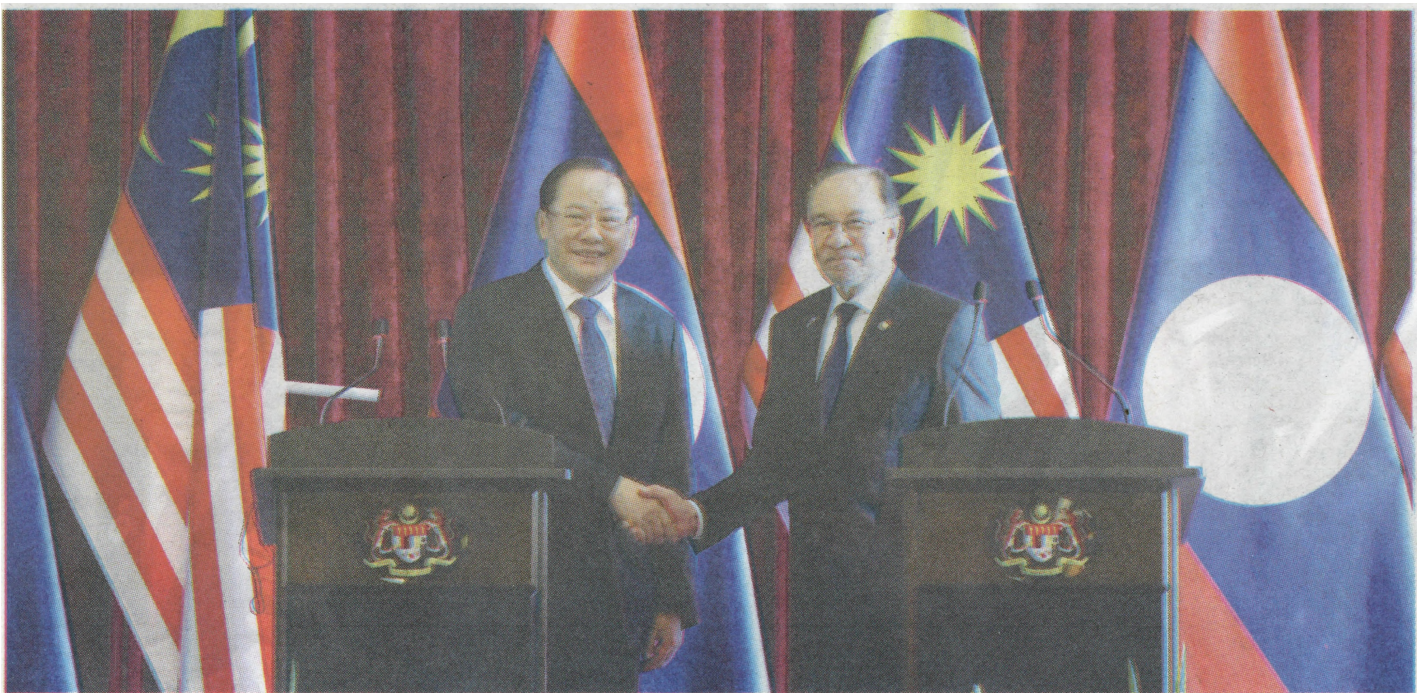
Siphandone's first visit to Malaysia since being elected as the Lao prime minister in December 2022.

The visit, ahead of the 46th Asean Summit, the second Asean-GCC Summit and the Asean-GCC-China Summit today and tomorrow in Kuala Lumpur, underscores the strong and enduring ties between Malaysia and Laos, Bernama reported.

The 46th Asean Summit is being held under Malaysia's 2025 chairmanship theme, "Inclusivity and Sustainability".

It also marks Malaysia's fifth time chairing the regional bloc since its previous chairmanships in 1977, 1997, 2005 and 2015. In 2024, total bilateral trade between Malaysia and Laos reached RM99.7 million, with Malaysia's exports valued at RM67.8 million and imports totalling RM31.9 million.

Malaysia is the 5th largest foreign investor in Laos, with total investments worth US\$942 million (RM3.9 billion) across 46 registered projects, focusing on sectors such as renewable energy, transport and logistics, telecommunication, construction, banking and hotel services.



Anwar shaking hands with Siphandone at the meeting. - BERNAMAPIC