

Asean-GCC marks landmark in regional diplomacy

> Anwar urges stronger ties, sustainable partnership and joint collective action for lasting growth

KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim described the 2nd Asean-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Summit as exceptional in the context of Southeast Asia.

He highlighted the presence of Asean leaders alongside representatives from the region's most dynamic GCC countries as a testament to the growing mutual trust and friendship between the two blocs.

Anwar hailed the summit as an extraordinary milestone in regional diplomacy with the Gulf countries, aimed at further deepening political, economic and strategic ties between the two regions.

"This is, in our experience in this region, quite extraordinary - to be able to bring in not only Asean leaders but also the most dynamic GCC countries to this region, to work together, build on trust, cooperation and true friendship" he said in his opening address at the 2nd Asean-GCC Summit at Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre yesterday.

Anwar said the summit builds on the foundations laid during the inaugural Asean-GCC Summit in Riyadh in 2023, affirming that continued engagement reflects a shared commitment to strengthening ties between the two regional groupings.

"Your presence is testament to our shared commitment to fostering stronger bonds between our two regions and further enhancing our strategic ties," he added.

As the key meeting of the Asean Summit 2025, Anwar said the chairmanship theme, "Inclusivity and Sustainability", reflects the aspiration for growth that is equitable, people-centred and forward-looking - values that align closely with Asean and the GCC.

"This theme aligns closely with stability through unity, prosperity through cooperation, and resilience through shared responsibility," he said, noting that the GCC was Asean's seventh-largest trading partner in 2023, with US\$130.7 billion (approximately RM554 billion at an exchange rate of US\$1 = RM4.24) in trade and growing investment, reflecting the confidence



Anwar welcomes Bahrain Crown Prince and Prime Minister Salman on his arrival for the summit at KLCC yesterday: GCC is Asean's seventh-largest trade partner, comprising the oil-producing nations of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. - **REUTERSPIC**

between the two regions.

Meanwhile, Anwar said growing investment and ties between Asean and the oil-rich GCC countries reflect increasing confidence in the long-term prospects of the partnership between both groupings.

The prime minister also said the Asean-GCC Framework of Cooperation 2024-2028, adopted at the inaugural summit in 2023, provides a blueprint to deepen collaboration across all three pillars of cooperation and that the momentum is encouraging.

Anwar believes that the Asean-GCC partnership has never been more important than it is today, "as we navigate an increasingly complex global landscape marked by economic uncertainty and geopolitical challenges".

"Today's deliberations will be crucial in ensuring that our partnership remains dynamic, responsive and impactful. Let us use today's summit to reaffirm our collective ambition and translate our shared vision into concrete and impactful cooperation."

Among the Asean leaders in attendance were the Sultan of Brunei, Sultan

Hassanal Bolkiah, Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet, Laos Prime Minister Sonexay Siphandone, Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr, Singapore Prime Minister Lawrence Wong and Thailand Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra, reported Bernama.

Also present were Timor-Leste Prime Minister Kay Rala Xanana Gusmao as an observer, and Asean secretary-general Dr Kao Kim Hourn.

Meanwhile, attending the summit from the GCC were Qatar Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Bahrain Crown Prince and Prime Minister Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa and Kuwaiti Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

Others in attendance were Oman Deputy Prime Minister Sayyid Asaad bin Tarik al Said, Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Prince Faisal Farhan Al Saud and UAE Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Ras Al Khaimah Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi.

