



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim speaking during the PNB Knowledge Forum at a hotel in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. With him is moderator Lorraine Hahn. NSTP PIC BY MOHAMAD SHAHRIL BADRI SAALI

## BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

# PM TO DISCUSS TRADE, GAZA WITH TRUMP

**Anwar says he will share views on what is good for Malaysia, the US and the world**

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**K**EY issues concerning Malaysia's trade interests and global peace efforts, including the situation in Gaza, are expected to be discussed behind closed doors with United States President Donald Trump during the Asean Summit here.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said Trump had been supportive and played a "major" role in helping to stop the bombings in Gaza.

"We spoke twice over the phone. He has been extremely cordial, very supportive and listens quite well.

"I want to make use of this opportunity to protect Malaysia's trade and investment interests, but also to express my views on what I think will be good for Malaysia, the US and the world.

"This includes issues affecting Palestine. Whatever reservations

you may have; you must commend the fact that Trump did a major service in stopping the bombings in Gaza.

"However, our challenge is to ensure peace, justice and, ultimately, the interests and aspirations of the Palestinians are upheld and that they are accorded their rights."

He said this during the "In Conversation with Anwar Ibrahim" session at the PNB Knowledge Forum yesterday.

Anwar said Malaysia's role in Asean was guided by the principle of centrality, ensuring that the region remained an active and credible platform for global dialogue and cooperation.

He said Malaysia maintained close relations with major powers, including China and the US, while expanding trade and diplomatic ties with emerging regions, such as Latin America and Africa.

"The key policy we uphold is the principle of centrality. As a trading nation, we are expanding trade not only with Europe, Asia and America, but also with Latin America and Africa.

"For the first time within the Asean fraternity framework, we have Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of Brazil and Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa joining us."

Speaking to reporters later, Anwar said Russian President Vladimir Putin was "seriously

considering" attending the summit this weekend.

He said Putin had expressed interest, adding that a decision was expected yesterday.

"He told me in Beijing that he would seriously consider this.

"We will know by today (yesterday) whether he is coming. I think it is likely, as he said he is keen to come, but officially, only the deputy prime minister will come for now."

This year's Asean Summit, themed "Inclusion and Sustainability" under Malaysia's chairmanship, is expected to be the largest in the bloc's history.

Brazil and South Africa are new sectoral dialogue partners, while Cyprus and Finland are set to become full dialogue partners.

Other world leaders expected are Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, Cypriot President Nikos Christodoulides, Finnish Prime Minister Petteri Orpo and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Chinese President Xi Jinping's attendance is unconfirmed.

The leaders of all Asean member states will also attend, along with Timor-Leste Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao, as the country is set to join the regional bloc.

*Page 1 pic: A worker putting the finishing touches to decorations for the Asean Summit at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre yesterday.*