

## NOTABLE PROGRESS

# Summit ends on high note with peace accord

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The 47th Asean Summit and Related Summits ended on a high note, marked by the accession of Timor-Leste as the bloc's 11th member and the signing of the Thailand-Cambodia peace agreement.

At the closing ceremony yesterday, Malaysia formally handed over the Asean chairmanship to the Philippines, which will assume the role on Jan 1, 2026.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim presented the gavel to Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr during the handover.

Anwar said Asean had made significant strides under Malaysia's chairmanship, remaining one of the most peaceful and economically dynamic regions in the world.

"Firstly, I don't think we should assess only based on my chairmanship. I inherited an organisation that has done remarkably well in some areas.

"We're not starting this year, but it is very critical that any regional body must secure peace —

and Asean is now one of the most peaceful regions in the world.

"Second, focusing on the economic fundamentals in terms of investment, trade and economic growth, it is one of the fastest-growing economies in the world.

"That is why the whole world is looking at us — because it is peaceful and has enormous potential to propel economic growth," he told a press conference after the summit.

Acknowledging that more work lies ahead, Anwar said Asean had achieved notable progress this year in several key areas.

He added that discussions on the Asean-European Union Free Trade Agreement (EU-FTA) were progressing faster due to Malaysia's regional economic partnerships.

"With China, the United States, and now with Latin America and Africa. When we talk about globalisation, we talk about multilateralism. Why must we ignore Africa and Latin America?

"People may choose to ignore them; some countries may not



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim presenting the gavel to Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr during the handover of the Asean chairmanship in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. AFP PIC

like Brazil or South Africa. Nothing to do with us. Both are my friends, and we believe strongly that we should engage and enhance collaboration, including trade and investment," he said.

Guided by the theme "Navigating Our Future Together", the Philippines is set to carry forward Malaysia's momentum as it assumes

the 2026 Asean chairmanship.

Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr, in his speech after receiving the gavel, said the Philippines would continue to fortify peace and security anchors, strengthen prosperity corridors and advance people empowerment.

He added that the Philippines

remains dedicated to facilitating the further integration of Timor-Leste into the Asean family.

Page 1 pic: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim (sixth from right) and leaders at the closing ceremony of the 47th Asean Summit and Related Summits in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.