

'Asean must not take sides'

PM calls for inclusive engagement with all powers

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KUALA LUMPUR: Asean should engage with all parties rather than take sides in global power dynamics, says Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

His remarks come as Malaysia prepares to welcome leaders from around the world, including China and the United States, for the upcoming Asean Summit and related meetings.

Highlighting Malaysia's commitment to maintaining balanced relations with major global powers, he said Malaysia is poised to foster an inclusive dialogue among diverse international leaders.

"Our partnership with the United States through Asean remains robust.

"We continue to cooperate closely on economic and security matters while ensuring Asean

stays united and independent in its decisions.

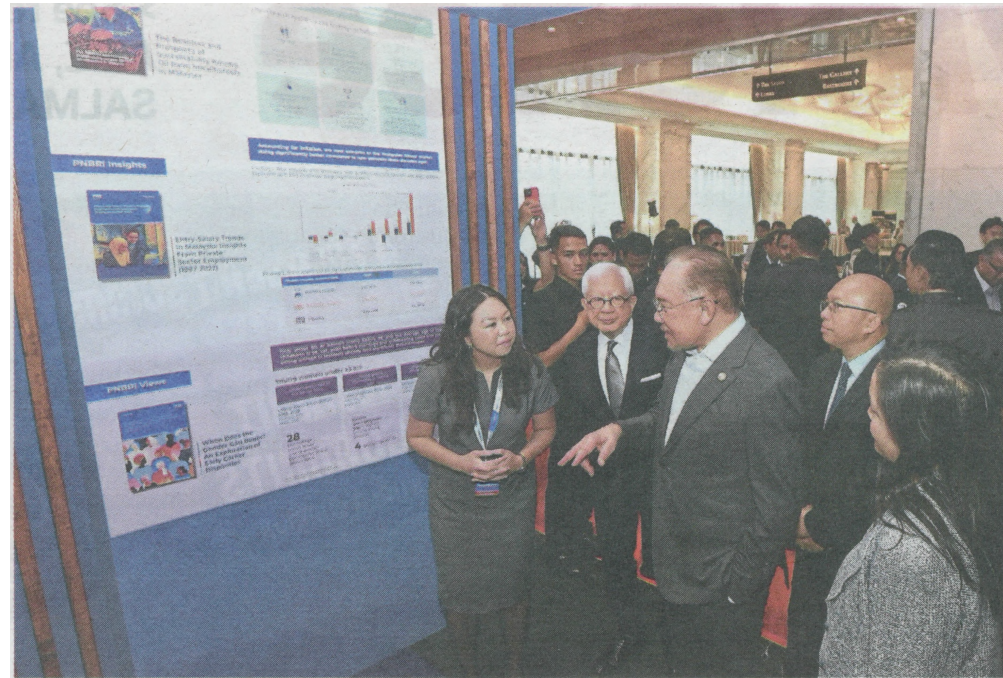
"Yet, we also value our relationship with China. We believe Asean should engage all sides, not take sides," he said during a sharing session at the PNB Knowledge Forum here yesterday.

Malaysia is set to host leaders from Brazil, South Africa and Canada for the first time, signalling a more inclusive Asean that connects Asia with the world, he added.

Asked about US President Donald Trump's attendance at Asean, Anwar recalled having several cordial phone calls with Trump.

He commended Trump for playing a significant role in stopping the bombing in Gaza, highlighting the importance of diplomatic engagement.

Anwar also discussed engaging with the younger generation, stressing the need for leaders,



Engaging with leaders:
Anwar (centre) flanked by CIMB group CEO Datuk Abdul Rahman Ahmad (right) and PNB Group Chairman Tan Sri Arshad Raja Tun Uda (left) while visiting a booth at the PNB Knowledge Forum 2025 in Kuala Lumpur.
- AZHAR MAHFUF/The Star

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Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim

educators and parents to learn from them.

"Leaders, teachers and parents must also learn from the younger generation.

"Their world, their language and even how they think are completely different from ours," he said.

"I can see it in my own chil-

dren. They challenge ideas and question things - and that's a good thing."

Anwar emphasised nurturing critical thinking and fostering a shared language grounded in ethics and values to connect modernity with morality.

"It's our duty as parents, educators and leaders to help

young people grow strong in character and conscience, even as they embrace the modern world. We must do it together as a community."

In his keynote address earlier, Anwar reaffirmed that the government will not interfere in the commercial decisions of government-linked companies and investment agencies, provided that their management uphold the principles of good governance, accountability and integrity. He said entities such as Permodalan Nasional Bhd and Khazanah Nasional Bhd must be empowered to make professional and independent business decisions in line with national policy directions.

"My concern is governance, transparency and integrity," he said.