

# Grand finale to a successful stint

## Malaysia ends Asean chairmanship with warmth and camaraderie



**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysia's Asean chairmanship concluded on a high note, marking the end of an eventful year of diplomacy, dialogue and renewed regional cooperation.

The closing ceremony of the 47th Asean Summit and related meetings was filled with warmth and camaraderie as leaders reflected on the progress made under Malaysia's stewardship.

The leaders also looked ahead to the Philippines' turn to lead the regional bloc in 2026.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, in his closing remarks, said it had been a privilege for Malaysia to host the summits and to witness the continued strength of Asean's shared purpose despite global uncertainty.

"Oh, what a relief!" quipped Anwar light-heartedly, drawing laughter from the floor as he acknowledged the conclusion of a packed week of meetings



and negotiations.

The Prime Minister noted that Malaysia took quiet satisfaction in meaningful conversations among member states and partners beyond the region, proving Asean's mission - guided by patience and reason - still works in a turbulent world.

He acknowledged that not every challenge can be solved

within a single chairmanship as "some crises will persist and some lives remain shadowed by fear".

"Yet history seldom leaps; it bends slowly through the will, labour and sheer stubbornness of those who refuse to despair."

The Prime Minister also expressed confidence that the bloc would remain united in navigating challenges ahead.

**One for the album:** Anwar and members of the media taking a photo together at the closing ceremony of the 47th Asean Summit and Related Summits at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre.  
-AZMAN GHANI/The Star

Upon receiving the symbolic gavel, Marcos applauded Malaysia for guiding Asean with clarity and conviction.

"We are committed to carrying forward Malaysia's momentum and to implementing in its first year the Asean Community Vision 2045, while ensuring Timor-Leste's full integration into the Asean family," he said.

He said Asean should pursue a stable and secure region under an open, inclusive, rules-based framework, stressing that international law must guide the bloc and that cooperation on traditional and non-traditional security must deepen.

"Asean is our ship, and 2026 will be the year when we set full sail together," he added.

Earlier, the ceremony began on a stirring note with a rendition of the Asean anthem by the Cempaka International School choir, whose harmonies filled the hall and drew a standing ovation from delegates.

The evening's atmosphere was one of pride and festivity, reflecting Malaysia's multicultural identity and Asean's spirit of unity in diversity.

"To my friend 'Bongbong', good luck as you assume this responsibility," he said, referring to Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.

"I have every confidence that under your steady hand, Asean will continue to act with clarity, composure and that warmth and poise for which the Filipino people are known," he said.