

M'sia, Timor-Leste chart new chapter of cooperation: PM

DILI: Malaysia and Timor-Leste have agreed to deepen cooperation across a wide range of sectors - from trade and education to health, tourism and security - as Dili prepares to join Asean as its 11th member.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim reaffirmed Malaysia's strong backing for Timor-Leste's Asean bid and broader bilateral ties.

"We discussed mechanisms to strengthen cooperation in trade, tourism, education, health and energy. Within Asean, Timor-Leste has done everything possible to accelerate the process, and Malaysia is honoured to host the function where Timor-Leste will officially become a full member of Asean."

Anwar also highlighted the "maximum level of trust" between both nations, covering connectivity, defence, procurement, training and information sharing.

"As maritime nations, we face similar challenges such as illegal fishing, intrusion and security. Collaboration will be critical."

Timor-Leste's Prime Minister Kay Rala Xanana Gusmao said Anwar's visit marked a milestone in bilateral relations since the two countries established diplomatic ties in 2002.

"Our talks today were warm and productive. We agreed to further enhance cooperation in key sectors, including trade, investment, higher education, health and tourism. Education and training, particularly new scholarships and institutional partnerships, are also a

top priority," he said at a joint press conference.

Gusmao noted the launch of new air services and visa-free travel arrangements to ease mobility for citizens of both countries, saying these initiatives would strengthen cultural understanding and people-to-people ties.

He also thanked Malaysia for its "strong and steadfast support" of Timor-Leste's development and Asean aspirations.

"We shared common views on regional and global issues, including peace, democracy and Palestine, where we stand united in calling for an end to violence and respect for international law," he added.

Both leaders pledged to continue close collaboration at bilateral and multilateral levels to deepen ties and bolster regional peace and stability.

On Myanmar, Anwar said there had been encouraging engagement.

"With Asean's support, the bombings have ceased and relative peace has returned since the earthquake, and Malaysia also established a field hospital."

He said Asean's mediation had also produced results in Thailand and Cambodia.

"We managed to prevent any escalation of violence, and this progress was only possible with the support of Asean countries."

Turning to the Middle East, Anwar reaffirmed Malaysia's firm stance.

"We oppose the atrocities in Gaza, where bombings continue to kill babies, children and innocent civilians."- Bernama



Anwar and Gusmao embrace their countries' longstanding friendship while pledging deeper cooperation across trade, education and security. - **BERNAMAPIC**