

PM: 2026 will test global power

'The world has a duty to keep diplomacy going even under pressure

ANKARA: Malaysia views 2026 as a critical year that will challenge long-standing assumptions about global power, order and responsibility, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said.

Speaking at a public lecture entitled "Power Shift: Strategic Choices For Malaysia And Turkiye" here yesterday, Anwar said the year ahead would be marked by significant uncertainty and strategic change at the global level.

"This will test many settled assumptions about power, order and responsibility," he said, adding that his first official visit to Turkiye would be among the most consequential visits in 2026.

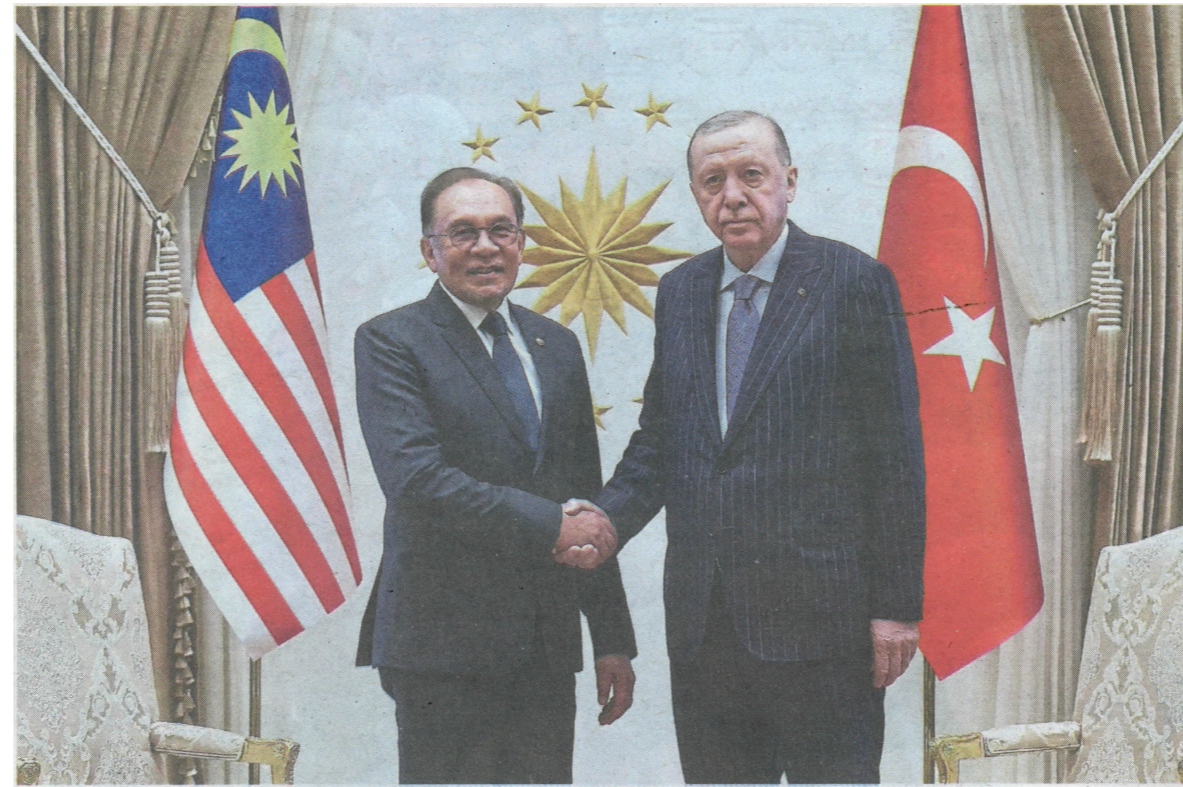
Anwar stressed that countries positioned as middle powers cannot afford to remain passive as global certainty continues to erode, nor simply wait for others to set the terms.

He said when diplomacy comes under strain, states have an obligation to sustain it, and to uphold international norms even when they are challenged.

"When diplomacy is under pressure, we have a responsibility to keep it functioning. When international law is bent or ignored, we must insist it still matters," he said at the event that was part of the programme of his maiden official visit to Turkiye.

Anwar, who is also Finance Minister, emphasised that cooperation among countries like Malaysia is not about confrontation or bloc politics aimed at any country, but about navigating an increasingly contested international environment.

He added that while such actions may not resolve every global dispute, they remain essential for preserving strategic space for smaller and middle-sized nations, and cautioned that rising uncertainty has raised the cost of miscalculation, making disen-



Boosting ties: Anwar shaking hands with Erdogan during his official visit to Turkiye. — Bernama

agement a risky option.

"The actions that countries like ours take will not resolve every contest," he noted.

"But they will help determine whether smaller countries retain room to manoeuvre, and whether law still constrains power."

In an earlier morning meeting with the Malaysia diaspora, he said the strength of the Madani government is built upon a spirit of togetherness and cooperation between parties.

He said the government's strength also lies in the consensus among all component parties that consistently work hand in hand to implement the national development agenda.

"If we are to endure, we must execute programmes more effectively and increase our efforts

more earnestly, such as assisting our children in new technological aspects like artificial intelligence and emerging fields through a core of faith and good character (akhlak).

"Imagine, in a year or two, the face of Malaysia will be transformed," he said in his speech at the Sentuhan Kasih Madani event attended by approximately 200 Malaysians, including professionals and students.

He was accompanied by his wife, Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail; Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abd Kadir; Investment, Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Johari Abdul Ghani, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan and the Malaysian Ambassador to Turkiye, Sazali

security interests.

The Turkish delegation comprised Defence Minister Yasar Guler, Turkish Aerospace Industries chief executive officer cum Turkiye-Malaysia Business Council chairman Dr Mehmet Demiroglu; Aselsan general manager Ahmet Akyol; and Defence Technologies Engineering and Trade Inc general manager Ozgur Guleruz.

Anwar was also accorded the honour of laying a wreath at Anitkabir here, the mausoleum of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the founder of the Turkish republic, along with being hosted on a tour of the complex.

"This visit offers a profound moment of reflection on the meaning of leadership, devotion to the nation and the importance of national values in building a just and dignified future," he said in a statement.

Anwar is in Turkiye on a three-day visit at the invitation of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan as part of efforts to strengthen bilateral ties and foster cooperation across various strategic sectors.

His meeting with Erdogan yesterday centred on efforts to strengthen collaboration in trade, investment, diplomacy, education, security, culture and tourism, and came following Erdogan's two-day official visit to Malaysia in February last year.

Malaysia's total trade with Turkiye from January to November 2025 reached RM21.2bil (US\$4.92bil), with the republic remaining an important economic partner.

In 2024, Turkiye was Malaysia's third-largest trading partner, largest export destination and fourth-largest source of imports among west Asian countries, with total trade valued at RM24.15bil (US\$5.28bil).

Anwar's visit ends today