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It could spur regional energy transition, strengthen energy security

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PETALING JAYA: Asean should deepen cooperation with China's Greater Bay Area (GBA) to accelerate the region's clean energy transition and strengthen energy security amid growing geopolitical uncertainty, says Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He said GBA's technological innovation, advanced manufacturing capabilities and sustainable financing expertise could complement Asean's push towards greater regional energy integration through initiatives such as the Asean Power Grid.

"By incorporating the technological and structural innovations of the Greater Bay Area, we can accelerate the proliferation of renewable energy and build robust, modern power systems across our borders," he said in his keynote address at the GBA-Asean Conference on Energy Transition and Integration yesterday.

Anwar said deeper engagement with China and other partner countries should continue to be pursued through Asean-led mechanisms, particularly the Asean Power Grid.

"China's clean energy is so massive that it takes up over a tenth of its GDP. For Asean member states, deeper engagement with China and other partner countries should be pursued through Asean-led mechanisms, such as the Asean Power Grid," he said.

He noted that the transition to clean and renewable energy had become a national security imperative as geopolitical conflicts increasingly disrupted global energy supply chains.

"The transition towards clean, renewable energy sources is therefore not just an ecological preference; it is a core national



Photo op: Anwar interacting with participants of the GBA-Asean Conference on Energy Transition and Integration in Bandar Sunway. — RAJA FAISAL HISHAN/The Star

security imperative. It is central to strengthening Malaysia and the region's energy security," he said.

Anwar said recent global conflicts had highlighted the vulnerabilities of existing energy supply chains, citing the ongoing war involving Iran, the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and disruptions to critical maritime routes.

"Apart from the human toll and the destruction of critical infrastructure, we are now confronted with the massive disruption of economies and energy supply chains," he said, adding that the situation had been compounded by the blockade of the Bab al-Mandeb Strait.

Highlighting the importance of strengthening regional cooperation, Anwar said governments

alone could not finance the transition, calling for stronger collaboration among the public sector, private investors and project developers to mobilise the capital needed for renewable energy projects, grid upgrades, battery storage and workforce upskilling.

He said Malaysia had long embraced innovative financing, citing the launch of the green sukuk framework in 2017, adding that the country's financial markets had since strengthened its position as a regional destination for sustainable investment.

Anwar also highlighted the expanding Asean Power Grid, including planned interconnections involving Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, Peninsular Malaysia,

Singapore, Sarawak, Sabah, Kalimantan and possibly the southern Philippines, saying the network would reinforce regional energy resilience.

Reaffirming Malaysia's National Energy Transition Roadmap, he said the country remained committed to achieving 40% renewable energy capacity by 2035 and 70% by 2050, while maintaining its pledge of no new coal-fired power plants and the gradual retirement of existing coal capacity.