

Trump's ASEAN Visit Revives Regional Relevance Amid Peace Efforts



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Kuala Lumpur, October 27, 2025 — The annual ASEAN Summit gained renewed global attention as

US President Donald Trump's high-profile visit coincided with the signing of a peace agreement

between Thailand and Cambodia, marking a rare diplomatic win for the regional bloc.

The agreement, brokered by Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, follows months of border

tensions that erupted into open conflict in July. Trump, who presided over the signing, described it

as a step toward “peace and prosperity” in Southeast Asia.

Prime Minister Anwar, a veteran mediator, leveraged long-standing ties with both countries to secure the ceasefire, while Trump’s economic influence reportedly helped finalize the deal.

Washington also announced new trade arrangements with Thailand, Cambodia, Malaysia, and Vietnam during the summit.

Analysts said Trump’s participation gave ASEAN its “moment in the sun” at a time when the group’s relevance had been under scrutiny. Despite its achievements in regional trade integration, ASEAN has been criticized for limited effectiveness in addressing crises such as Myanmar’s ongoing conflict and South China Sea tensions.

Formed in 1967, ASEAN functions primarily as a platform for diplomatic dialogue rather than a political or defense alliance. Experts note that its principle of non-interference limits its ability to enforce decisions but helps preserve unity among its diverse members.

In a symbolic highlight, East Timor was officially admitted as ASEAN’s newest member, completing the bloc’s geographic representation across Southeast Asia. Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao called the milestone “a dream realized” for his nation.

As Trump departs for Japan and South Korea, where he is set to meet Chinese President Xi Jinping, observers say the ASEAN Summit provided both the US and Southeast Asia with a timely

opportunity to project cooperation amid regional and global challenges.