

PM: Asean should remain neutral amid US-China rivalry

KUALA LUMPUR: Asean should remain independent and neutral amid the heightened US and China rivalry, says Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The Prime Minister made the statement in an interview with China's national broadcaster CCTV. The interview was recorded during his three-day official visit to Beijing last week and aired on Friday night.

Malaysia is one of the five founding members of Asean, which was formed in 1967.

Anwar pointed out that Asean was formed to promote peace and stability in the region and these objectives should be maintained.

"That position continues. We do not want the region to be the base for military competition. That position has been quite consistent although we remain friendly to all countries," he added.

He said the region should not be the ground for power contest nor should it be allowed to be engrossed in unnecessary provocation arising from the rivalry.

Citing Aukus, Anwar said Malaysia had raised concern that the trilateral security pact involving Australia, United Kingdom and United States in the Indo Pacific would further aggravate the situation in the region, Bernama reported.

"That is why Malaysia took a tougher line on this, and have been consistent in its position since the beginning not to allow this situation to aggravate into military tension, or be deemed or seen to be provocative," he said.

He also urged China and the US to find an amicable solution to ease tensions.

On the domestic front, Anwar said Malaysia is back on track after promoting good governance as the core of his administration in order to drive further growth and development for the country.

He said the government also focused on stamping out corruption and ridding the country of that image.