

Charting Malaysia's path with US

PM: Important to maintain strong relations while balancing our economic priorities

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SUBANG JAYA: Malaysia is prepared to have engagements with the United States under the Donald Trump administration while balancing its own economic priorities, says Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

With Trump set to return to the White House next month, the Prime Minister said it is important to maintain strong bilateral relations with the United States, particularly in the high-tech sector.

"Many of my team members (have been) in communication with the potential team of President Trump and, so far, initial engagements have been quite positive," he said during a special interview with editors-in-chief yesterday.

Malaysia will helm the 10-member regional bloc of Asean just before Trump's inauguration as US president on Jan 20.

Anwar said Malaysia has begun engagements with Trump's team to ensure the continuity of bilateral ties with the United States, which is a major trade and investment partner.

"Our relations with their big players are excellent... like Google, Microsoft, Amazon Web Services and of course they would have some influence in the administration.

"And primarily, Trump is quite pragmatic and has strong busi-



Exchanging ideas: Star Media Group chief content officer Datin Paduka Esther Ng posing a question to Anwar during a special interview with editors-in-chief. — YAP CHEE HONG/The Star

ness acumen."

He said that Malaysia must ensure it continues to benefit from positive US engagement while maintaining regional stability.

Anwar highlighted that pragmatism and strategic engagement

would be key to ensuring stability and growth in the region.

He also reaffirmed Malaysia's focus on Asean centrality, saying that the bloc's collective strength would play a vital role in navigating the complexities of US-China tensions under the

incoming Trump administration.

"I think we have the advantage with some of our friends like the Philippines, which is relatively closer to the US, as well as former Thailand premier Thaksin Shinawatra, who is also effective

in engaging with the United States and China.

"I have my strengths and weaknesses but together as a team, we can complement (one another)."

Anwar also made clear Malaysia's stand on neutrality and centrality, which, he said, is critical for the survival of the region.

On a separate matter, Anwar reaffirmed Malaysia's commitment to strengthening Asean-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) ties, highlighting the importance of cohesive engagement between member states and ensuring Asean remains relevant in addressing global challenges.

He underscored Malaysia's role as it prepares to assume the Asean chairmanship in 2025, emphasising the need for collective efforts to strengthen Asean's centrality and its partnerships with other regions, including the Middle East.

Anwar said the engagement with GCC had been fruitful and Malaysia would continue to build on these strong foundations.

On Asean's internal challenges, Anwar reiterated the bloc's commitment to the Five-Point Consensus (5PCs) framework, particularly in resolving the crisis in Myanmar.

"In the previous sessions we held, we allowed the neighbours and friendlier parties to continue engaging with the general framework of the five-point consensus," he said.