

CONSENSUS

PM: ASEAN REJECTS UNILATERAL TARIFFS

They go against the multilateralism and free trade that the bloc champions, says Anwar

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ASEAN has rejected any form of tariffs imposed unilaterally as they contradict the spirit of multilateralism and free trade championed by the bloc.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said this was discussed with his Thai counterpart, Paetongtarn Shinawatra, on Thursday regarding the new tariffs imposed by United States President Donald Trump.

"Asean supports free trade and multilateralism.

"We disagree with any unilateral actions or the imposition of tariffs that go against the spirit of multilateral agreements.

"This is the consensus that has been reached (by Asean)."

He said this after concluding his two-day working visit here at the invitation of Paetongtarn.

Anwar said two meetings, the Asean Finance Ministers' Meeting and the Asean Economic Ministers' Meeting, were held recently to take initial steps to address Trump's unilateral tariffs.

"I am Very pleased that Japanese



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and his wife, Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, at the Finance Ministry's Hari Raya Aidilfitri open house in Putrajaya yesterday, NSTP
PIC BY AHMAD UKASYAH

Prime Minister Shigeru Shiba, New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon and Asean as a whole feel that they need to use a (multilateral) mechanism.

"This mechanism is an opportunity to engage in dialogue with the US, in addition to fostering cooperation among nations so that we can craft joint strategies."

On April 2, the Trump administration imposed a minimum 10 per cent tariff on imports from all countries under its reciprocal tariffs system. Malaysia was subjected to a tariff of 24 per cent, Thailand 36 per cent, Indonesia 32 per cent, Cambodia 49 per cent, Laos 48 per cent, Vietnam 46 per cent and Myanmar 44 per cent.

Brunei and the Philippines were imposed with tariffs of 24 per cent and 17 per cent, respectively, while Singapore faces a base tariff of 10 per cent. Most tariffs the US imposed were suspended for 90 days from April 9.

Later in Putrajaya, Anwar hit

back at US conservative political commentator Bill O'Reilly for mocking the economic value of China President Xi Jinping's visit to Southeast Asia recently.

He said such comments showed arrogance and a lack of knowledge about the region.

"This kind of thinking still exists and leads to xenophobia, racism and Islamophobia. It stems from ignorance," he said after attending the Finance Ministry's Hari Raya Aidilfitri open house yesterday.

O'Reilly had mocked Xi's official visits to Malaysia, Vietnam, and Cambodia, claiming the region would be of little economic help to China amid its trade tensions with the US.

"Hey, President Xi, let me just break it to you. Those folks have no money at all. They cannot help you. They are not gonna buy your stuff because they don't have any money," O'Reilly said in a video posted on X.