

# Anwar: No retreat, no rush

## Asean can weather current tariff crisis, says Prime Minister

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** With Asean being a region seasoned by adversity, the answer to the latest issue affecting the grouping - the United States' "reciprocal tariffs" - is neither to retreat nor rush, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim (pic) told fellow leaders of the regional bloc.

From currency shocks to a global contagion, Asean had seen it all, the Prime Minister said.

"We have weathered disruptions. And each time, we have rebuilt not merely what was lost, but what was possible," he said at the gala dinner in conjunction with the 12th Asean Finance Ministers' and Central Bank Governors' Meeting last night.

Anwar's speech was read out by Finance Minister II Datuk Seri



Amir Hamzah Azizan.

The Prime Minister said Asean's resilience must be paired with purpose.

"The world is not standing still and neither can we. The ground beneath the global economy is shifting.

"What once felt settled, rules, norms, the spirit of open exchange is now less certain, more brittle," he said.

Anwar said Asean is no longer a



quiet corner of the global economy, but in fact is central to it.

"To command influence, it must be united and be able to speak in one voice and act with shared intent," the Prime Minister pointed out.

He said this is why Malaysia's Asean chairmanship is guided by the themes of 'Sustainability and Inclusivity', adding that the motto was not merely a rhetorical flourish, but represented practical ambitions.

"Inclusivity means growth that does not merely lift markets but touches lives, reaching the small traders, the young entrepreneurs, the underserved and the unseen,"

he said.

Sustainability, he further explained, means more than climate consciousness, but also about continuity of opportunities, stability and faith in institutions.

"It calls on us to plan with discipline, to invest with foresight, and to act with care.

"Whether by deepening intra-Asean trade, aligning our frameworks for green finance, strengthening safety nets or broadening access to capital, we shape the region we wish to inhabit, not only tomorrow but in the decades to come," he added.

Anwar said Asean's strength has never been in sameness but in the habit of finding harmony amid differences.

"In quiet, sometimes imperfect, but enduring consensus. And that habit, especially now, is one worth tending," the Prime Minister added.