

# 90-day US tariff pause only offers temporary relief: PM

> Malaysia evaluating ripple effects, working with Asean partners to cushion blow, strengthen regional economic resilience and push for fair trade rules

**PETALING JAYA:** The 90-day pause on tariffs by the United States (US) on 75 countries, including Malaysia, provides only temporary relief, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim yesterday.

"Malaysia is involved, but this is short-term," he said after attending an *Aidilfitri* open house hosted by the Energy Transition and Water Transformation Ministry.

Earlier, Investment, Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Tengku Zafrul Abdul Aziz welcomed the decision to pause tariff hikes on many of US' trading partners, but noted that the move injects fresh uncertainty into Asean economies.

"This shifting landscape will be front and centre at the Asean Economic Ministers' Meeting I'm chairing this morning," he said in a post on social media yesterday.

He added that with US President Donald Trump's tariff policy, "the only certainty is uncertainty"

Yesterday's special meeting was convened to forge a united Asean response to Trump's sweeping reciprocal tariffs.

"Malaysia is actively evaluating the ripple effects and remains firmly committed to working with Asean partners to cushion the blow, strengthen regional economic resilience and push for fair, predictable trade rules."

Tengku Zafrul said Asean unity and deeper regional integration are now more critical than ever.

He said Malaysia remains a reliable and transparent trading partner to all, including China and the US, committed to securing win-win outcomes.

He added that Malaysia is accelerating trade diversification, breaking into new and unfamiliar markets, and fast-tracking economic reforms to sharpen its competitive edge.

"Our priority is to navigate this volatile terrain while securing Malaysia's economic future."

Trump said on Wednesday he had considered a 90-day delay to the planned tariff hikes "over the last few days" and credited the pause to active diplomatic

engagement, reported Anadolu Ajansi.

The announcement coincided with a dramatic 125% tariff on Chinese imports.

Trump said the pause follows appeals from affected nations seeking to "negotiate a solution" to trade disputes spanning tariffs, currency manipulation and non-monetary barriers.

He said these countries had not retaliated "in any way, shape or form against the US"

On Tuesday, Anwar had said Malaysia does not subscribe to megaphone diplomacy in dealing with Washington's tariff whiplash.

He said in line with its policy of quiet engagement, Malaysia would instead

despatch officials to Washington to initiate dialogue.

Anwar acknowledged there may be limited scope to revisit the underlying intent but maintained there is room to adjust how the policy is implemented.

It was reported that Tengku Zafrul would lead Malaysia's delegation to Washington at the end of this month to engage on the reciprocal tariffs, Bernama reported.

He will be joined by Investment, Trade and Industry Ministry Deputy Secretary-General (Trade) Mastura Ahmad Mustafa, senior ministry officials as well the ministry's representatives from the Malaysian Embassy in Washington.

Asean's Indochina bloc bore the brunt of the tariff hike with Cambodia hit with 49%, Laos 48%, Vietnam 46%, and Myanmar 44%.

Thailand was slapped with 36%, Indonesia 32%, Brunei and Malaysia 24% each, the Philippines 17% and Singapore the baseline 10%.



Anwar and Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof at the *Aidilfitri* open house in Petaling Jaya yesterday. - **BERNAMAPIC**