

PM: US trade pact doesn't weaken ties with China

KOALA LUMPUR: Nothing in Malaysia's trade agreement with the United States prevents the country from continuing its cooperation with China, says Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The Prime Minister said that Malaysia had explained to China regarding its trade agreement with the US.

"I don't think we should exaggerate (the matter).

"There are some clarifications and we have given them (to China)," he said, referring to his recent meeting with Chinese Premier Li Qiang.

"Nothing in the agreement bars us from continuing our collaboration with China," he said, reaffirming Putrajaya's commitment to maintaining strong economic ties with Beijing.

On Nov 28, China complained to Malaysia and Cambodia about the trade deals they signed with the US last month, underscoring the delicate balance countries must strike in the rivalry between Beijing and Washington.

Beijing has "grave concerns" with portions of the US-Malaysia trade deal, Chinese Commerce Ministry officials said.

Beijing's objections centred on clauses that require Malaysia and Cambodia to align with Washington on sensitive national security issues.

"We hope Malaysia will fully consider and properly handle this matter in light of its long-term national interests," it said.

On Oct 26, Malaysia and the US signed a trade deal in which the US - Malaysia's third-largest trading partner - agreed to keep tariffs on Malaysian goods at 19%.

In return, Malaysia agreed to remove or reduce tariffs on selected US goods.