

INTERVIEW WITH TRT WORLD

PM: MALAYSIA OBJECTS TO TRUMP'S TARIFFS MOVE

Anwar says any policy not conducive to free trade will hurt nation, region and even US

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MALAYSIA has expressed its disagreement with any move by the United States under President Donald Trump's administration to impose tariffs on foreign competitors or allies.

In an interview with Turkish public broadcaster TRT World, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said any policy that was not conducive to free trade would not only affect Malaysia and the region, including Asean, but also the US itself.

"As a policy, notwithstanding the US' position, of course, we object.

Because for the last many decades, the West has been preaching about free trade.

"And now, emerging economies seem to have established themselves on a strong footing, and suddenly you (the US) want to impose these tariffs.

"I, as a matter of principle, would object to this, but we will have to weather the storm."

He was asked on potential trade wars and the impending tariffs to be imposed by the US under Trump's administration.

Anwar, who is also finance minister, said Malaysia would continue to maintain excellent bilateral ties with the US and China, despite the trade war between the two global superpowers.

"The same goes for the EU (European Union). Other countries,

such as Turkiye, India and Australia, are also important.

"Broadening the base... That is why we have applied to join BRICS. We want to be an effective trading nation," he said.

Anwar believed that uncertainties, which he described as "minor turbulence" looming after Trump took office as the 47th US president, would settle down soon.

"Well, there is a period of uncertainty. So, we expect some 'minor turbulence' in global affairs.

"I see, from his statements, that he is very protectionist and wants to focus purely on the US.

"But I believe this will probably settle down after a few months because most of his colleagues and advisers are global corporate players who have as much interest in the US as overseas."

It was reported that Trump had announced his plan to impose a 10 per cent tariff on Chinese imports starting on Feb 1.

He was quoted as saying that the tariffs were in response to China's role in the fentanyl crisis, alleging that the drug was being shipped from China

through Canada and Mexico into the US.

In his first appearance before global leaders at the World Economic Forum, Trump told business leaders that they should manufacture their products within the US to avoid import tariffs.

"My message to every business in the world is very simple. Come make your product in the US, and we will give you among the lowest taxes of any nation on earth," Trump said in a video conference from Washington.

"But if you don't make your products in the US, which is your prerogative, then very simply, you will have to pay a tariff — differing amounts — which will direct hundreds of billions, even trillions, of dollars into our treasury," Trump added.

I, as a matter of principle, would object to this, but we will have to weather the storm.

DATUK SERI ANWAR IBRAHIM
Prime minister