

PM: Malaysia to focus on economic reforms before expanding global ties

PUTRAJAYA: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said Malaysia is focusing on domestic economic reforms before expanding international partnerships.

He said these included strengthening ties within Asean, engaging key players such as China, India and Pakistan, and deepening relations with the European Union to address the impact of United States tariffs policy.

He said the EU had been aggressive and active in engaging with Asean.

He said Malaysia had initiated early engagement with the US

through Investment, Trade and Industry Minister Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz, who held talks with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on the tariff issue.

The talks, he said, were positive and offered a platform to clarify Malaysia's trade position.

"There was a follow-up meeting in South Korea and, amazingly, we saw a statement by Asean, China, Japan and South Korea, which is very positive because it shows that we are prepared to consider the matter and openly promote multilateralism.

"Secretary Rubio had a long session with the foreign minister (Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan). I also spoke with him, and the US has promised to consider it and give us a boost."

Anwar said this at a briefing on the 2025 Asean Summit with Malaysian editors-in-chief and international media on Wednesday.

He reaffirmed Malaysia's commitment to remaining a trading nation, saying in addition to traditional partners such as China and the US, it was exploring new markets, including Russia.

Malaysia will also participate in

the BRICS Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on July 6 and 7.

Anwar said Malaysia's semiconductor sector remained unaffected by the US tariffs, describing it as "the most positive" area amid global trade uncertainties.

He said he would raise the Gaza issue during the Asean Leaders' Retreat, held in conjunction with the 46th Asean Summit.

"The bombardment continues. We have lost our humanity in a world full of cruelty. Malaysia has done whatever we can. But within Asean, we build consensus to push for a ceasefire."

On other matters, Anwar said recent developments in Myanmar were "remarkable progress", citing positive engagement with all key parties involved.

Anwar said Malaysia had been pushing for inclusive dialogue and better access to humanitarian aid in Myanmar in line with the bloc's Five-Point Consensus.

He cited the recent coordinated response to an earthquake in a conflict-affected area as an example of improved humanitarian access made possible through ongoing engagements with various stakeholders. **Bernama**