

## AGREEMENT ON RECIPROCAL TRADE

# PM: Malaysia-US deal doesn't restrict rare earth cooperation with other countries

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said claims that the Malaysia-United States Agreement on Reciprocal Trade (ART) restricts rare earth cooperation with other countries are incorrect.

He told the Dewan Rakyat that Malaysia had provided South Korean firm JS Link the opportunity to establish rare earth and super magnet facilities in Pahang despite the signing of the ART with US President Donald Trump.

JS Link is reportedly expanding its operations into the rare earth permanent magnet industry, aiming to build a sustainable global supply chain and secure its po-

sition within the rare earth magnet network.

Anwar said Malaysia's deal with the US did not limit cooperation with other countries, but sought to attract broader investment from partners, including China and South Korea.

"With Premier Li Qiang, I proposed accelerating Chinese investment with Khazanah (Nasional Bhd) in the rare earth sector. This does not restrict investment at all, rather it expands it," he said during Prime Minister's Question Time.

He said in several discussions, the government pushed for more investments and economic activ-

ities in less-developed states to narrow the gap with other regions.

He said there was a need for an inland port in Perlis, noting that discussions in Laos and Cambodia also addressed how inland ports could be optimised.

"This is on record. Kulim High-Tech will naturally be a focal point for us. Johor is also developing rapidly and significantly.

"In Kelantan, when I met Rohm Electronics, I told them about the incentives and flexibility we can provide to them if they expanded their facilities there.

"This means that states must also take more aggressive actions to generate economic growth

within their regions."

Anwar was responding to a question by Datuk Ahmad Amzad Hashim (PN-Kuala Terengganu) on the income gaps between ethnic groups and in different states.

Anwar said under the Madani concept, growth must be balanced and equitable, and by next year, the income gap between ethnic groups would improve.

"First, we increased public servants' salaries. Second, the Rahmat Cash Aid initiatives. And third, the increase of the minimum wage. These measures will bring change.

"Additionally, several Bumiputera programmes, including

significant allocations in education, technical and vocational education and training and other educational initiatives, are aimed at providing the Bumiputera with fairer opportunities to compete," he said.

On another matter, he said Malaysia's gross domestic product (GDP) growth could be higher this year, supported by strong economic performance.

"The economy remains robust and resilient, recording an impressive growth of 4.4 per cent in the first half. The third quarter GDP is projected at 5.2 per cent. Overall growth for the year has the potential to surpass projections."