

# Sovereignty still intact after US trade deal

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has dismissed accusations that Malaysia's Reciprocal Trade Agreement with the United States compromises the nation's sovereignty or dignity, calling such claims inaccurate and alarmist.

Anwar said critics were misreading the agreement, particularly on matters considered sensitive to Washington - namely, rare earth elements (REE), semiconductors and the use of local currency in transactions.

He stressed that although negotiations with the United States were required on these areas under the agreement, Malaysia retained full freedom to pursue partnerships with other countries. Using REE as an example, the Prime Minister said Malaysia had continued cooperation with South Korea on a super magnet REE plant in Kuantan, alongside an arrangement between Khazanah Nasional Bhd and China on REE processing.

Anwar emphasised that reading the agreement required understanding its broader context, adding that pressure from the United States was "relatively stronger" not just on Malaysia but globally, as countries sought to avoid excessive tariffs.

"(But the allegation that) our independence or dignity is compromised - that is simply not true," he said.