

'No apology for inking trade deal'

PM: We need investments from US, and the agreement has exit clauses

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KUALA LUMPUR: Refusing to be apologetic over the signing of Malaysia-US reciprocal trade agreement, Datuk Anwar Ibrahim says the move, meant to ensure high investment and trade into the country, is provided with an exit clause.

"This trade deal has exit clauses and why we need to sign the agreement is because we need US investments. This is the reason I refused to be apologetic (about signing the trade deal)," Anwar told the Dewan Rakyat.

The Prime Minister was replying to a supplementary question from Wan Ahmad Fayhsal Wan Ahmad Kamal (PN-Machang) who claimed clauses in the trade deal has "tied" Malaysia and provided the United States with more advantages.

He said any move by the government to present friendly ties with other countries was constantly being criticised by various parties even though they are for the betterment of the country.

"The same thing happened earlier when we were close to China. Every move is being attacked.

"So which country should we



The long and short of it: Sultan Ibrahim (right) getting a briefing from Anwar on the outcomes of the 47th Asean Summit and Related Summits held in Kuala Lumpur. — Photo from Sultan Ibrahim Sultan Iskandar's Facebook page

have close ties with; Kelantan or Kedah?

"Even those two states, I am friendly with them.

"This is about the country, I am not young but I am working hard to ensure we gain attention to benefit the country for a better future," he added.

He expressed concern that such opposition could affect Malaysia's

diplomatic ties with other countries.

"The new reciprocal deal was explained by the Investment, Trade and Industry Minister on Wednesday and there is an opportunity to debate on the matter later," he said.

Anwar said the administration agreed to allow government-linked companies (GLCs) to make pur-

chases from the United States under the new trade agreement.

Regarding the commitment requiring Malaysia to buy US goods totalling more than RM1 trillion, he explained that this does not involve government's money, but rather, the purchases are made by GLCs.

"Take Malaysia Airlines for example, the company bought 30

aircraft from Airbus and another 30 from Boeing. The purchase plan had been made a long time ago. I did not order (the aircraft). This was done by MAS.

"For gas imports, it is certainly not new. It is a great success of PETRONAS' exploration investment in Canada which was previously condemned," he said.

Concerns were raised by several MPs over the recently signed Malaysia-US Agreement on Reciprocal Trade, with some describing it as a "one-sided deal" that threatened Malaysia's economic independence.

The Prime Minister also had an audience with His Majesty Sultan Ibrahim, King of Malaysia, where Sultan Ibrahim was briefed on the outcomes of the just-concluded 47th Asean Summit and Related Summits.

A total of 80 outcome documents were received and approved throughout the Summit.

Malaysia has officially handed over the Asean chairmanship to the Philippines.