

PM: ASIAN SCRIPT IN NEXT WORLD ORDER

Anwar calls for reordering of global economy with future chapter written in 'Asian ink' as well



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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said the various reordering of the global economy by the West has shown that the future must be written with "Asian ink".

He said there have been various economic watershed moments, such as the establishment of a new international monetary system post-World War 2 and the end of the gold standard in 1971.

The latest, he said, was the United States administration's "Liberation Day" reciprocal tariff measures, which he described as "the weaponisation of trade".

"Each of these reorderings was scripted far from our shores. Asia was present, but it was not the author.

"Today, we have the responsibility to ensure that the next chapter is written with Asian ink as well," he said in a public lecture yesterday at Tianjin University titled "Sovereign Interdependence: Building a Shared Future in Asia".

Tianjin University is regarded as China's oldest modern university and houses some 400 Malaysian students.

Anwar said the International Monetary Fund had estimated that severe fragmentation of trade and technological decoupling could cost some nations up to 12 per cent of their national output.

Emerging economies, he said, were especially vulnerable.

"For decades, openness allowed them to leap forward, converge toward higher incomes and pull hundreds of millions out of poverty. If knowledge, technology and capital now begin to flow only



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim giving a public lecture at Tianjin University in China yesterday. BERNAMA PIC

within gated blocs, the ladder of opportunity may be kicked away just as others are beginning to climb," he said.

Anwar proposed "sovereign interdependence" as a means to resolve the issue.

This, he said, meant allowing nations to "remain fully themselves — sovereign in choice, in voice and in destiny — while still being open to the flows of trade and investment, of talent and technology, on which prosperity depends".

He cited the example of China's Admiral Zheng He, who linked ancient Melaka to Arabia and Africa.

Zheng He, he said, brought gifts, but not conquest; exchanges, but not subjugation.

"We must design interdependence that fortifies sovereignty rather than undermines it. Interdependence should not make nations fearful that their autonomy will be diluted.

"It should give them confidence that, by being connected, their resilience is multiplied."

He said Asia, as the engine of global growth, had a special responsibility to play to achieve this.

He said China, as a civilisational power, could make choices that will shape the region's openness, stability and inclusiveness.

"Malaysia can make its own contribution, to show that it is possible to be sovereign without being suspicious, open without being naive.

"And Asia, as a community of diverse nations, has the responsibility to ensure that the next economic reordering is not one of division, but one of fairness and shared prosperity."

Anwar attributed the strong ties between Malaysia and China to the mutual respect and faith both countries have in each other.

He said Malaysia's move in being the first non-socialist nation

in Southeast Asia to recognise the People's Republic of China in 1974 was "a bold gesture of confidence in the future" and has led to a relationship that rests on firm foundations.

"Half a century on, that confidence has matured into a habit of trust — steady, sometimes quiet, but always real," he said.

Anwar paid tribute to President Xi Jinping for helping to nurture the special relationship between the nations.

"The three meetings I have had thus far with President Xi Jinping — most recently during his state visit to Kuala Lumpur this April — were continuations of that long journey.

"Each encounter carried forward the understanding that our two countries, different in size yet equal in respect, can speak with candour and act with consistency."

He said trust made practical co-operation not only possible, but solid and vibrant.

"We see it in the high-quality infrastructure that's supercharging our commercial links, our growing collaboration in green energy and the digital economy, and in smaller but meaningful steps that touch daily life, such as the introduction of mutual visa-free travel.

"What gives this, relationship its weight is the assurance that even in uncertain times, both countries keep faith with one another. And it is precisely in moments of turbulence that such steadiness matters most."

Anwar arrived here on Sunday to kick off his four-day working visit to China, his fourth to the country since 2023.

He is scheduled for back-to-back meetings with Xi and Premier Li Qiang in Beijing, before attending China's Victory Day Parade in Tiananmen Square to commemorate the end of World War 2.