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Anuwar enters the big time from small town beginning

MOST potential entrepreneurs choose big cities to start business ventures and accumulate wealth. But Anuwar Yazid, 43, did not choose that path.

This kampung boy from Slim Village, Tanjung Malim, Perak, went north in 1989 and started his business in Pulau Langkawi, which was not as famous as it is now.

While others adopted the wait-and-see attitude, this enterprising businessman braved his way to tremendous success. Today, he owns three companies - one specialises in landscaping and the others in souvenir-supply and travel. The beginnings were humble.

Anuwar, a graduate in business studies, started out supplying fresh fruit to hotels in Kuala Lumpur from 1986 to 1988. He also sold cut fruit at Pusat Bandar Damansara.

With just enough savings, he travelled to Pulau Langkawi for the start of his journey to become a businessman.

His first venture was the setting up of Perkhidmatan Dobi Mat Sirat in 1989, a laundry catering to several hotels and resorts in the island.

With the right connections and foresight in business, he switched businesses and set up Sendi Pertiwi Travel and Tour in 1992. This was followed by Vision Landscape & Services in 1996 and GMC Lagenda Trading this year.

"I started from zero, in terms of knowledge and expertise.

"It is my interest and commitment to my ventures that drove me on," said the father of four.

Anuwar does not believe in luck. This probably explains why he was able to sail through the economic slowdown in 1997.

He set up the travel agency because there was ample opportunity in the resort island. Among the services provided by the agency is car rental.

But it would be risky to venture into this sector alone as the tourism business is seasonal in nature.

Bearing this in mind, and given his interest in plants, Anuwar set up a landscaping company and secured several landscaping and maintenance contracts from hotels.

"The Prime Minister (Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad) has on many occasions appealed to the people to preserve the environment.

"I think my venture is in response to his call. Furthermore, I feel very happy when I see my landscaping being admired by so many people in the hotels," he said.

Anuwar started as a small-time supplier of souvenirs and gift items for the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace exhibition in 1995 before setting up GMC Lagenda.

Currently, he is running three souvenir stalls at the expo site of the 10th OIC Summit.

Anuwar hopes to consolidate his existing businesses before deciding on what to venture into next.

But other potential entrepreneurs in the making may find it worthwhile at this point to note his secret recipes of success - to honour your word, be hands-on and work hard.