

Anwar cautions Najib not to be too dependent on China

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Hafiz Yatim

Former opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim today lauded Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's trip to China, but also warned against being too dependent on that country.

"The visit (to China) is something positive, but I also caution against being too dependent on that country.

"There should be a sign of caution and it is better for Malaysia to focus on the economy, and the sooner he (Najib) realises it, the better," Anwar told reporters outside the High Court in Kuala Lumpur.

In a press statement he issued later, Anwar said it seemed that Malaysia had become desperate economically.

"We agree and welcome China's preparedness to invest in and get involved in Malaysia's economy.

"However, the dependence of Malaysia's economy on another country is not wise as this will affect Malaysia's interests and make it dependent on the other country's foreign policy and geo-political strategies," he warned.

Anwar added that Malaysia's economy was in a mess and burdening the people.

"After the tabling of Budget 2017 by the finance minister, the prices of petrol and cooking oil have been raised too high. The budget is not transparent and is hiding the rising prices, which are burdening the people.

"Cooking oil is a product of the country. Why is there no effort to go to the big local producers to make sure a small portion of their production is utilised for consumers in the country at a controlled price?

"This shows Umno-BN is supporting the rich conglomerates, not the people," he said.

Anwar said Najib should look at the Selangor budget, which properly managed the state economy and valued civil servants through programmes focused on housing, education and healthcare.

Similar warnings by Mahathir

Malaysia yesterday inked [14 Memorandums of Understanding](#) (MOUs) with China, related to the defence, economy, agriculture, education, finance and the construction sectors, worth RM143.6 billion.

Najib and his Chinese counterpart Li Keqiang witnessed the signing ceremonies after jointly chairing a bilateral meeting between Malaysia and China at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

Also yesterday, former Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad **warned** that the deals Najib inked with China may end up threatening Malaysia's sovereignty.

According to the 91-year-old statesman, some of the questionable deals included Malaysia's territorial claim in the South China Sea, which is also being claimed by China, and the RM55 billion loans from China to construct the East Coast Rail Link (ECRL).

"We already have a huge debt and now we are going to owe such a large sum to a single source. It will have an impact on the country's politics. Last time, we were free to have relations with any country. We were not tied down by agreements with any blocs," Mahathir had said.

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