

Act against these little Napoleons

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I FULLY agree with Brendan Pereira's commentary "Red tape hassles a damper on US investment" (NST, May 8) on the heavy red tape and bureaucracy which seriously dampens US-led investments.

While our Government under Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi works tirelessly to open up Malaysia to attract more foreign investments and our Tourism Ministry is actively trying to woo more Chinese visitors, our "high and mighty" Immigration Department continues to place more obstacles along the way.

During my six years working in India in the early 1990s, I noticed that the same situation confronted all foreign investors.

The central Government in New Delhi had given full approval for foreign banks to op-

erate but the state authorities continued to delay their commencement of business by imposing an additional 10 licensing requirements.

Expatriates, though given three-year work permits by the central Government, still have to go to Immigration every six months as a formality to get a stamp on their passports.

That is why even up to today, India is still way behind China, Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore, Taiwan and Indonesia in attracting substantial foreign investments — all due to its heavy red tape and bureaucratic delays.

Sad to say, Malaysia is just the same nowadays in adopting India's archaic way of doing things, while missing out so much in market growth globally.

This is due to our so-called "little Napoleons" as our Prime Minister recently labelled them.

How can foreigners be attracted to Malaysia when getting a work permit, even by multinational corporations, takes almost a year?

To get things moving — that is the ability to attract a greater volume of foreign investments as well as larger numbers of Chinese visitors — the Prime Minister must now wield the big stick.

No more mere warnings or reminders but to take strong affirmative action against these "little Napoleons" who have treacherously sabotaged the Government's efforts at every turn.

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