

EU envoy: Malaysia ideal place to invest

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But there's room for improvement

KUANTAN: Malaysia is still an ideal place for investment despite the emergence of China and Vietnam, European Union (EU) ambassador Thierry Rommel said.

He said that despite the threat posed by the two Asian powerhouses, Malaysia would still attract much foreign direct investments over the next few years.

"Take, for example, China. There is still some degree of uncertainty despite the vast potential there.

"To us, Malaysia is still our choice as, based on feedback, our firms are happy to be here. Of course, there is still room for improvement in terms of reducing red tape and other supporting logistics," he told *The Star* when met after a briefing on Pahang's development here yesterday.

Rommel was part of the delegation of EU countries here on a three-day working visit to establish formal links of friendship and business opportunities.

Among the EU countries represented were Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, Czech Republic, Ireland, Austria, Finland, Slovakia, Romania, Sweden, Poland, Hun-

gary and Belgium.

Earlier, the delegation paid a courtesy call on Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob before being given a briefing by state Economic Planning Unit director Datuk Abdul Rahman Abdul Hamid.

The delegation was also taken on a tour of the state museum and the DaimlerChrysler assembly plant in Pekan.

Rommel said Malaysia needed to focus more on human capital to have an edge over other emerging countries.

At a press conference, German Ambassador Herbert Jess said the partnership with Malaysia, particularly Pahang, needed to be further enhanced, as German firms had huge investments in the state.

Of the top five foreign firms in Pahang, four were from the EU: BASF-Petronas, Eletrijsola and DaimlerChrysler (all German) and Flexys Chemicals (Belgium). EU countries' investments in Pahang accounted for some 47% of the foreign direct investments.

Jess said another German firm had set up operations in Janda Baik to produce copper wire.