

'CHINA VISIT A SUCCESS DUE TO TEAMWORK'

Hard work of ministers, civil servants made it possible, says PM

HANA NAZ HARUN
PUTRAJAYA
news@nst.com.my

DATUK Seri Anwar Ibrahim said his maiden visit to China was successful because of the teamwork between departments and agencies.

At the Prime Minister's Department's monthly assembly, the prime minister said the country achieved "extraordinary success" during his official trip to the economic giant and attributed this to the hard work of not just ministers, but civil servants as well.

"The discussions (with leaders in China) were fruitful and we were given the highest honour not just in terms of diplomacy.

"This is not because of the prime minister (alone), but also because of the team of leaders and civil servants, and how they managed to arrange everything.

"We also gathered almost 50 giant corporations to bring in investments worth billions of dollars, something that has never happened before.

"This is due to the efforts not just of the Foreign Ministry but others too, who had met (these companies) before my meetings in China," he said.

During Anwar's four-day working visit there, Malaysia recorded RM170 billion worth of investment commitments from China, the biggest by far from the republic.

This was a result of 19 memoranda of understanding (MoUs) between businesses in China and Malaysia, witnessed by Anwar, who is also finance minister.

Among the notable MoUs were the agreements between DRB-Hicom Bhd and Zhejiang Geely Holding Group Co Ltd, and another between the Associated Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Malaysia and the China Chamber of Commerce.

Anwar also expressed a need for Chinese companies operating in Malaysia to prioritise hiring qualified Malaysians.

"If there aren't enough



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim speaking at the Prime Minister's Department monthly assembly in Putrajaya yesterday. With him are his deputies, Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi (left) and Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof BERNAMA PIC

(Malaysians), we can approve (the hiring of Chinese nationals), but they must first prove that there has been some effort to hire Malaysians.

"And if there aren't enough qualified Malaysians, they must also form a team to train Malaysians," he added.

Anwar also said several companies from China had agreed, for the first time, to choose Malaysia as their regional hub, indirectly giving a boost to the country's image.

He said he would announce the details in the near future.

"I feel there is a boost in Malaysia's hopes and image, as several leading companies have agreed to make Malaysia their regional hub.

"Such companies would usually choose our neighbouring countries. But for the first time, they want their regional hub to be here in Malaysia."

He added that if the government maintained its pace, particularly in terms of administration, governance and good image, the country's future would be brighter.

He also said when the politics in the country was stable, and when there was ease in doing business, it would boost investor confidence.

This was especially so when there were clear rules, as well as cleaner and more efficient procedures.

"We cannot deny that there are (unethical behaviours). I also still hear of people asking for commissions in my office and in the offices of ministers and their officers.

"These old ways need time to be cleaned up. So I ask cooperation from all of you, because when we have a good image, everything falls into place easily."

On another matter, Anwar said Malaysia was ready to negotiate issues surrounding claims on the South China Sea with China.

He said he had raised the matter with China President Xi Jinping during his official visit there.

He said the South China Sea dispute was brought up because Malaysia's national oil and gas company Petroliam Nasional Bhd (Petronas) had one of its largest oil rigs operating in the said waters.

"At the same time, China is laying claim to the same area. I said as a small nation, Malaysia needed its oil and gas supply, so we have to continue (with the operation of the oil rig).

"But if the condition is that we must hold discussions, then we are ready to do so," he said.

Anwar also said he highlighted the issue of the Rohingya during his meeting with Xi, despite knowing that China had a non-intervention policy.

"China is close to Myanmar, but they said they have a non-intervention policy.

"I said we, too, did not want to interfere, but there are nearly 200,000 Rohingya refugees here (Malaysia). So whether we like it or not, what's happening in Myanmar is affecting us, too.

"So at least we've raised this issue, and the China leadership said they will continue their discussions with Myanmar."