

PM praises civil servants for China trip success

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PUTRAJAYA: Giant Chinese companies are interested in basing their regional hubs in Malaysia after having learnt of the ease of doing business here due to the country's political stability, says Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Speaking about his recent four-day working visit to China, he said the trip allowed him to also discuss "sensitive issues" with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang.

The Prime Minister said that this was due to the meticulous preparations by government agencies and departments that

had intensive engagements with Chinese companies before his visit.

"It was a successful trip to China thanks to the team that made the preparations with other government departments, as it was important for us to show that the ease of doing business is clear amid political stability," said Anwar, who roundly commended government agencies at the monthly meeting between the Prime Minister and the staff of the Prime Minister's Office here yesterday.

"I realise (the success of the trip) was not because of me alone, but because of the civil servants who organised everything with 50 giant companies that managed

to come together in China. I am grateful for the teamwork," he added.

Backed by a trade delegation of about 200 people, Anwar's visit saw a record RM170bil worth of investment commitments and expressions of interest from Chinese corporations and entities being secured.

He also said that if civil servants continued portraying a united image of the government, Chinese companies which had expressed an interest in making Malaysia their regional hub would be persuaded to do so.

"I also mentioned to Chinese companies that there should be more upskilling and employment of local workers, as they tend to

bring their own workers.

"These companies come in with tens of billions of ringgit of investments," said Anwar.

While praising civil servants, he however, took a swipe at those who expected to be paid "commissions" for work done in their official capacity.

"We cannot deny that there are still those who ask for commissions for doing the work, but that will be eradicated in time as old habits die hard," he said.

Anwar said he also raised the plight of Rohingya refugees in his private discussions with Chinese leaders.

"China has strong ties with Myanmar. I explained that I respect their stand, but we have

more than 200,000 Rohingya refugees in Malaysia.

"We cannot send them back as they will not be accepted by the Myanmar junta which had abused them. What do we do? I had to state Malaysia's stand on the Rohingya.

"Also, during my trip to China and also Cambodia thereafter, I managed to meet and pray with thousands of Muslims there.

"It was an opportunity I could not say 'no' to, although I do not usually like to travel during Ramadan," said Anwar, who also called on civil servants to hold religious classes during lunch breaks to not only read the Quran, but also to understand its content.