

Cabinet to decide on panel to monitor China investments

> Projects from the republic now monitored by International Trade and Industry Ministry and supervised by China's premier: Anwar

KUALA LUMPUR: The Cabinet will decide on follow-up measures in the wake of his recent visit to China, including the need to establish a committee to monitor investments from there, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He said the follow-up measures would be discussed in a Cabinet meeting today.

Anwar said so far, investments and projects from China are being monitored by the International Trade and Industry Ministry and by the Chinese government under the supervision of Prime Minister Li Qiang.

He said the projects would be implemented at the end of this year or early next year at the latest.

Anwar added that the organisational capabilities of the Malaysian Investment Development Authority and the Malaysian External Trade Development Corporation as well as the

preparations made by the Foreign Ministry, the International Trade and Industry Ministry and officers led to the satisfactory performance achieved.

He was replying to a supplementary question from Fong Kui Lun (DAP-Bukit Bintang) in the Dewan Rakyat yesterday on the establishment of a special committee to monitor investments from China.

Earlier, Anwar had announced the positive results of his maiden visit to China in terms of economic and investment opportunities, including an investment commitment of RM170 billion obtained.

He said several MoUs were signed during the visit, including 12 in the service sector, 11 in the manufacturing sector and four in the infrastructure sector.

Anwar added that Petronas would continue with its exploration

project in the South China Sea although there are overlapping claims by China for the area.

He said Malaysia considered the area, where the exploration project is being carried out, to be in the country's territorial waters.

"In any case, if China considers this to be its right, we are open for negotiations, but in the meantime, for exploration efforts, we will continue.

"I do not want to avoid negotiations because this is Asean's stand. For Asean, all overlapping claims should be resolved through negotiations, but until now, Malaysia insists that this (exploration project) is in Malaysia's area or territory."

He was replying to a question from Datuk Seri Takiyuddin Hassan (PN-Kota Bharu), who wanted to know whether the prime minister discussed regional security issues during his visit to China, especially the presence of the Chinese navy in the South China Sea.

Anwar said Malaysia's stance on the exploration by Petronas had been conveyed to Chinese President Xi Jinping and his counterpart Li Qiang during his visit to the republic.

"The matter was raised because

of the overlapping claims in the South China Sea, especially China's concern over Petronas' activity in the area."

On the presence of Chinese ships and navy in the South China Sea, Anwar said China had clarified that it was in international waters, but the Foreign Ministry would continue to monitor the situation and issue a protest note if there are "collisions".

Anwar said Malaysia and Asean were firm in their stance not to support any effort that could increase tension, especially in the military field, Bernama reported.

He said this is the reason that when the establishment of Aukus was announced, Malaysia expressed its concern that it might be considered provocative and cause China to increase its activities in the region.

Aukus refers to the formation of a trilateral defence cooperation among Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States.

On March 30, Defence Minister Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan said as a member of Asean, Malaysia holds to the principle of maintaining Asean as a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality, including on issues related to nuclear disarmament and nuclear proliferation prevention.