

# 'Rethink palm oil export sanctions'

## PM urges EU to allow economy justice after reforestation efforts

By MAZWIN NIK ANIS  
mazwin@thestar.com.my

**PUTRAJAYA:** The European Union (EU) should do justice to economies by allowing them to function after necessary measures have been taken to ensure that their oil palm plantations are sustainable, says the Prime Minister.

Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said Asean, including Malaysia, had encountered difficulties with the EU pertaining to palm oil exports due to the sanctions imposed.

He said as the world's second largest palm oil producer, Malaysia was deeply concerned over the implementation of the EU deforestation-free products regulation and he had raised those concerns during discussions with visiting German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier.

"We have taken all necessary measures and carried out reforestation, including in peat soil areas. They (the EU) should do justice to this region.

"They should allow us to function economically and not be so rigid," said the Prime Minister at a joint press conference with Steinmeier.

Anwar said he had shared with Steinmeier Malaysia's initiatives, including the mandatory implementation of the Malaysian Sustainable Palm Oil certification to the palm oil industry.

He added that Malaysia was just as committed to finding climate change solutions as other countries.

"It is not for one region to impose, we think it is unjust and impairs the progress and development of our country.

"Malaysia is of the view that any

attempt to protect the environment should not be at the expense of our economy," he added.

The EU recently introduced new deforestation regulations on the import of selected commodities including palm oil, of which it claimed to be linked to 'deforestation and forest degradation.

The Prime Minister said he had also informed Steinmeier of PETRONAS' interest to export liquefied natural gas to Germany.

"Another issue which we discussed was the alarming trend of Islamophobia and growing fascism in some parts of Europe and the West.

"This trend undermines global peace, harmony and security.

"Malaysia stands ready to work with Germany to combat intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigma-

tisation, discrimination and incitement of violence," he said.

To a question, Anwar said Malaysia regarded China as an important trading partner and would continue to have good relations with the country.

"For Malaysia and Asean, we take the position of peace and neutrality," he added.

Steinmeier noted that there were 700 German companies operating in Malaysia which had created 65,000 jobs, adding that this cooperation should be further extended to draw more benefits.

He said although Germany's investments and the presence of its companies in Malaysia were significant, he believed more could be done.

"What convinced me was the aspect of vocational training. I spoke

to young people here and they said there is a need to intensify vocational training in Malaysia," he added.

He said Germany and Malaysia should intensify relations, adding that aside from sharing commonalities and both having established democracies, the nations shared a commitment to free and fair trade, as well as to combat climate change.

Steinmeier, who is in Malaysia for a three-day official visit, heads to Sarawak today.

The last state visit to Malaysia by a German president was 26 years ago in April 1997.

Germany is Malaysia's largest trading partner from the EU. Last year, Malaysia's total trade with Germany increased by 10.9% to RM59.87bil (US\$13.62bil) compared to RM53.99bil (US\$13.03bil) in 2021.