

FAHMI: PM'S SAUDI VISIT SUCCESSFUL

Minister says trip has opened the way for more Saudi investments in Malaysia

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Communications and Digital Minister Fahmi Fadzil has shot down allegations that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's recent visit to Saudi Arabia was unsuccessful, saying such claims are off the mark.

He said although the prime minister was unable to have an audience with King Salman Abdulaziz Al-Saud or Crown Prince Mohammed Salman Al-Saud during his first official visit to the kingdom, it had, nevertheless, opened the way for more Saudi investments in Malaysia.

He said the transition to Ramadan was the reason why the prime minister was invited to extend his three-day official visit by two more days.

"Unfortunately, he had to decline as he had a breaking-of-fast event with the Yang di-Pertuan Agong last night (Saturday) along with cabinet members," he said.

Fahmi said the visit met its ob-

jectives, which were to strengthen bilateral relations and cooperation with Riyadh.

He called on certain quarters that claimed the visit was a "failure" to stop doing so.

"We are in the month of Ramadan, therefore, we should focus on reflecting on ourselves and devote more time to worship.

"As a minister, I saw how the visit achieved its objectives," he said after officiating at a "Back to School" distribution of aid to 271 primary and secondary students in the Lembah Pantai constituency.

Fahmi said during the visit, Anwar had meetings with various parties, including the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation secretary-general and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) president.

He said IsDB had shown interest, particularly in telecommunications infrastructure.

"We spoke to the president and vice-presidents. They were keen on our efforts to make Malaysia a data centre hub for Southeast Asia.

"This is a positive development and we will see if we can bring in investment opportunities.

"So stop trying to cause a dispute and, most importantly, *Alhamdulillah*, the visit to Saudi Arabia has achieved its objectives."

Fahmi added that the Saudi king

and crown prince were among the earliest foreign dignitaries to congratulate Anwar on his appointment as the country's 10th prime minister.

On Saturday, Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia Youth chief Wan Ahmad Fayhsal Wan Ahmad Kamal questioned the outcome of Anwar's visit to Saudi Arabia as the prime minister did not meet the crown prince.

Anwar began his visit to the kingdom on Wednesday. He was accompanied by his wife, Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, and Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir, among others.

Anwar told the Malaysian press in Saudi Arabia that IsDB, the Jeddah Chamber of Commerce and Industry, as well as leaders of the Saudi business community represented in the National Business Chambers of Commerce, were among those committed to doing business in Malaysia.

He said the representatives had taken note of the stable political situation in Malaysia, as well as the unity government's efforts to combat corruption, inculcate good governance and facilitate the ease of doing business.

Anwar also witnessed the signing of several memoranda of understanding between companies in Malaysia and Saudi Arabia, and met with the Malaysian community, including students, during the visit.