



**Busy schedule:** Anwar walking the streets of New York after giving his speech at the UN General Assembly. (Right) The Prime Minister smiling for the camera during a dinner with the Malaysian diaspora and students in New York. — Bernama



## Anwar: Govt looking into ways to attract skilled Malaysians home

**NEW YORK:** The government is looking into ways to attract skilled Malaysians to return and contribute to the country in a move to address the threat of brain drain Malaysia is facing now, says Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The Prime Minister said the relevant ministries - International Trade and Industry, Economy as well as Higher Education - are currently engaging with those who are able to contribute to return home and be placed at specific areas of competence to help the nation.

"I am sure this can be done, it is ongoing... and we should, as you know we are now encountering

the problem of brain drain in the past years.

"Top scholars, top economists, top accountants are leaving or have left, so now we have to make sure that we have a system that could encourage them to come back with incentives," he said at a dinner with the Malaysian diaspora and students here yesterday.

Anwar, who arrived in the city on Wednesday, had earlier delivered Malaysia's National Statement at the 78th United Nations General Assembly, Bernama reported.

He said the government had set up a committee to review the sal-

ary scheme of public servants but any restructuring needed to be done according to the country's financial position.

"What I have inherited is RM1.5 trillion debt, 5.6% deficit, which means if I'm a responsible leader, I have to gradually reduce the debt.

"And if we are responsible in terms of prudent economic policy, then we will have to reduce the deficit, from 5.6% last year to 5.3% this year, and hoping to reach 5% in 2024," he added.

On the question of dual citizenship, Anwar said the matter would be discussed further by assessing the implications of the

implementation as it would involve a major policy decision.

"The Foreign Ministry and Home Ministry will put up a paper and will discuss its implications.

"For now we are not in favour but since there were requests, we'll at least look at it and see whether we need to adjust or not," he said.

Anwar was asked if there was a possibility that the government would allow dual citizenship to encourage Malaysian professionals living abroad to contribute to the country's development, without having to choose between their homeland and

adopted countries.

The dinner was attended by about 1,000 people.

Also present were Malaysian Ambassador to the United States Datuk Seri Nazri Aziz, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Zambry Abd Kadir, Home Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail, Investment, Trade and Industry Minister Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz, Health Minister Dr Zaliha Mustafa and the Representative to the United Nations, Datuk Ahmad Faisal Muhamad.

Currently, there are about 25,000 Malaysians residing in the United States.