

# Potential RM45.4bil windfall

## PM's trip generates investment interest from top European companies

**HAMBURG:** Malaysia has generated new investment interest with a potential value of RM45.4bil following Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's visit to Germany which ended on Friday.

Anwar said he met 38 captains of industry from Germany, Belgium, France and the Netherlands who gave their commitments to either make new investments or expand their investments in Malaysia.

Among the top companies that he met in Berlin and Hamburg were X-Fab Silicon Foundries, Melexis, Infineon Technology, Schott AG, Siemens Energy, Nexperia and Airbus.

Anwar said X-Fab will make a large investment in Sarawak while Infineon, which has been established in Malaysia for five decades, will add a further investment of €5mil (RM25.6mil).

"We were able to achieve all this due to the good relations with German leaders. Although there are differences of opinion on certain issues such as Gaza, our relations are very good from the diplomatic and economic points of view. International coverage from the *Financial Times* and *The New York Times*, which consider Malaysia a global centre in electronics and semiconductors development, also assisted in our efforts," he said.

Airbus is prepared to buy products and services worth RM1.4bil in the next five years, he said.

Anwar said investors from Germany and other European countries have confidence in Malaysia due to its political stability, clear policies and the efficiency of the government machinery in the project approval process.

"Incentives (offered) are almost similar to those of neighbouring countries. But what they find attractive appears to be our political stability, clear policies and willingness to work as a team in expediting the approval process of projects," he told a



**Man of the hour:** Anwar delivering the keynote speech while attending the 101st East Asia Friendship Dinner (Ostasiatisches Liebesmahl) at Hamburg City Hall organised by the German Asia-Pacific Business Association (OAV). - Picture courtesy of Anwar's Facebook

press conference at the end of his six-day visit to Berlin and Hamburg.

Anwar, who is also Finance Minister, said Malaysia's policies related to energy transition also helped to attract new investments.

"Our emphasis on, for example, green policies, energy transition and energy renewal, and hydrogen and solar research makes them interested in investing in Malaysia," he said.

While in Berlin, Anwar had a bilateral meeting with his counterpart Chancellor Olaf Scholz and German Vice-Chancellor and Economy and Climate Action Minister Robert Habeck.

He also paid a courtesy call on German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier.

Anwar said Malaysia's prag-

matic foreign policy, including good relations with the United States, Europe, China, Japan and South Korea, also helped in attracting investments.

"This is very helpful in view of the United States-China tensions," he added.

On the European Union Deforestation Regulation which affects palm oil exports to Europe, Anwar said European criticism of deforestation is off the mark.

"(The critics) have not kept abreast of the latest developments. Currently, there is no widespread deforestation like there used to be. After I explained to them the current situation, they seemed to have a more positive attitude," he said.

There are over 700 German companies based in Malaysia with nearly US\$15bil (RM70.24bil)

in investments.

Bilateral trade between the two countries was valued at RM63.5bil last year, with a 1.8% rise in exports to RM30.56bil from RM30.03bil in 2022.

A total of 486 projects involving German companies worth RM45.69bil were implemented last year, creating 49,591 jobs.

Earlier in his address at the 101st Ostasiatisches Liebesmahl at the Hamburg City Hall, Anwar said it is time for Malaysia and the European Union to rekindle discussion on a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) to further strengthen bilateral relations and regional integration.

With an FTA, he said Europe will be able to capitalise on Malaysia as a gateway to Asia,

The Ostasiatisches Liebesmahl is one of the most important

events celebrating the country's relationship with Asia.

Prominent figures from the fields of economics, politics and diplomacy gather at this annual event.

Anwar arrived in Berlin on March 10 for a six-day visit to the third largest economy in the world.

Germany has been Malaysia's largest trading partner among European Union member countries since 2000, while Malaysia is the largest trading partner for Germany among Asean member states. — Bernama