

PM's visit to Germany set to boost business ties

BERLIN: Malaysia will be looking at enhancing its bilateral and business ties with Germany, its largest trading partner among European Union members when Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim undertakes a six-day visit from March 10-15 to the country.

Malaysian Ambassador to Germany Datin Paduka Dr Adina Kamarudin said Anwar would be holding a bilateral meeting with his German counterpart Chancellor Olaf Scholz, besides paying a courtesy call on President Frank-Walter Steinmeier.

"He is expected to discuss various bilateral and global issues during his meetings with the two German leaders," she said at a media conference with the Malaysian media covering the premier's visit here.

Steinmeier made a state visit to Malaysia from Feb 16-19 last year, when he also visited two of Germany's largest investors in the country, semiconductor manufacturer Infineon and medical technology specialist B. Braun.

During the visit, Steinmeier said Malaysia would be an important location for German companies to diversify their businesses and investments, adding that there are

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over 700 German companies in the country providing 65,000 jobs.

Anwar, who is expected to arrive in Berlin today, will meet top industry leaders at six meetings and engagements, most of them from the country's top SMEs, which are the backbone of Germany's economy.

Adina said the premier would kick off his visit by touring the Siemens Energy plant in Huttenstrabe, which has invested heavily in Malaysia.

Siemens Energy produces renewable energy from sun, wind, water and biomass, and the key player in Malaysia's energy transition employs about 26,000 workers.

Anwar will meet about 30 captains of industry and potential investors from Europe at a business roundtable meeting tomorrow.

"German companies are looking

at Malaysia because of the various incentives offered, especially the customised tax incentives and the supporting role played by agencies like the Malaysia Investment Development Authority."

Adina added that issues like Malaysia's palm oil export to Europe and climate change are likely to be brought up during Anwar's meeting with Deputy Chancellor and Economic Affairs and Climate Action Minister Robert Habeck before the premier delivers a keynote address at "Mittelstand or SME Future Day" on Wednesday.

There are 3.2 million SMEs in Germany, employing 56% of the more than 38.4 million employees in 2021, Bernama reported.

Anwar will also meet the Malaysian diaspora before attending prayers and *Tarawih* at Sehittik Mosque during his stay in the capital.

While in Berlin, Anwar will have a speaking engagement at Korber Foundation, a non-profit organisation focusing on social and political issues.

He will also visit Hamburg to attend the 101st East Asia Friendship dinner hosted by the German Asia-Pacific Business Association, where he is scheduled to speak.

Adina said due to the Ukraine war which has affected Germany, especially the availability of cheap gas, the country is now looking at South East Asia to diversify its business.

During the visit, the premier will be accompanied by Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan, Investment, Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Tengku Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz and Entrepreneur and Cooperatives Development Minister Datuk Ewon Benedick.

Germany has been Malaysia's largest trading partner among EU member countries since 2000, while Malaysia is the largest trading partner for Germany among Asean member states. In 2023, Malaysia's total trade with Germany rose by 5.9% to RM63.45 billion compared with RM59.87 billion in 2022.