



People taking selfies as Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim arrives at Kuala Lumpur International Airport yesterday. PIC COURTESY OF PM'S OFFICE

FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENTS GROWING

PM: ASEAN A VITAL TRADE PLATFORM

Anwar highlights Malaysia's central role in bloc in interview with 'Forbes'

KUALA LUMPUR

MALAYSIA'S growing prominence as a key economic player in Asean is underscored by a record-breaking surge in foreign direct investments (FDI) and its increasing diplomatic engagements on the global stage, a report in an international magazine said.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, who returned to Malaysia yesterday after an 11-day diplomatic tour of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Peru and Brazil, highlighted Malaysia's significant role in Asean in the interview with *Forbes*.

Anwar described Asean as a "vital trade platform", offering "simplified access to ten markets in Southeast Asia".

The prime minister also highlighted the country's central role in the bloc, emphasising actions to streamline trade flows and re-

duce bureaucratic hurdles to attract foreign investment.

He said Malaysia's strategic geographical position facilitated trade not only within Asean, but also with non-Asean partners like Australia and India.

The article said Anwar's efforts to streamline trade, reduce bureaucratic hurdles and strengthen economic partnerships were reflected in Malaysia attracting US\$74 billion in FDI last year, the highest in its history.

It added that by the middle of the year, Malaysia had secured an additional US\$36 billion, solidifying its position as a regional hub for global investors.

As the country prepares to chair Asean next year, it said, Malaysia's integration into a larger regional strategy enhances its appeal as a gateway to Southeast Asia.

During his diplomatic trip, Anwar led Malaysia's delegation at global events, including the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Economic Leaders' Week in Peru and the G20 Summit in Brazil.

At the Extraordinary Arab and Islamic Summit in Riyadh, he advocated for a global consensus to suspend or expel Israel from the United Nations, reaffirming Malaysia's support for Palestine.

He also discussed Malaysia's commitment to sustainable

growth with leaders such as Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

Anwar also met French President Emmanuel Macron at the G20 Summit in Rio de Janeiro, where the two leaders focused on strengthening bilateral relations in areas such as trade, investment, defence, tourism and artificial intelligence.

Macron's social media post about their meeting, written in both Malay and French, was well received by netizens.

On his return, Anwar was welcomed by senior political secretary Datuk Seri Shamsul Iskandar Md Akin at Kuala Lumpur International Airport.

Despite marking the second anniversary of his swearing-in as the 10th prime minister, there will be no official celebrations this month.

Instead, Anwar will focus on his upcoming official visit to South Korea on Nov 24.

During the visit, several memoranda of understanding involving various ministries and agencies will be signed.

Communications Minister Fahmi Fadzil said the prime minister remained committed to his duties, with the South Korea visit serving as a critical step in furthering strategic cooperation between the two nations. **Bernama**