

PM: 80pc of travel costs covered by private firms

KUALA LUMPUR: Nearly 80 per cent of the costs for Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's visits to five countries in the past two months were covered by private companies, the Dewan Rakyat was told yesterday.

Anwar, during the prime minister's question time, said some costs were borne by private firms involved in the meetings abroad.

He said this approach was one of the measures introduced by his administration to ensure efficient management of expenses for official visits.

"We did things differently recently, as I noticed that travel

costs were often quite high.

"What we did this time was work with the investment, trade and industry minister (Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz).

"We invited companies such as Petronas, Sapura Energy, and Proton, among others, to join the delegation, where they covered the airfare and associated costs.

"Around 70 or 80 per cent of the flight costs were borne by companies with business and investment interests," he said in response to Datuk Mohd Shahar Abdullah (BN-Paya Besar) on the costs of his recent overseas trips.

Anwar, who is finance minister,

said the final flight costs have yet to be detailed as he had just returned.

"However, the costs were indeed high as the trips were from Kuala Lumpur to Cairo, Riyadh, Lima, Rio de Janeiro and Doha.

"It was three continents, but 75 per cent of the costs were covered by the involved companies."

Anwar visited China from Nov 4 to 7, followed by trips to Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Peru and Brazil from Nov 9 to 19.

He also led a delegation to the 31st Apec Economic Leaders' Week in Peru and the G20 Summit in Brazil.