

'EXPLORE NEW METHODS'

Make voting easier for Malaysians abroad, Anwar tells EC

BRUSSELS: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has called for equal voting rights for Malaysians living abroad, urging the Election Commission (EC) to explore new methods that make it easier for them to vote.

He said overseas Malaysians should not be deprived of their right to vote in elections.

"The EC is an independent body, but I have raised this issue with them. They must give the opportunity to every single

Malaysian to vote," he said during a gathering with around 200 members of the Malaysian diaspora in Brussels.

Anwar, who arrived on Sunday for a two-day working visit to Belgium, said this when asked about the difficulties faced by Malaysians abroad during elections in their home country.

He also suggested moving away from relying on embassies for the voting process, proposing alternative mechanisms to allow

Malaysians abroad to vote directly, even if additional funding was needed.

He added that the EC was receptive to his suggestion.

On another matter, Anwar said green technology and forestation were among the top priorities of the current administration.

"Europe has destroyed its forests; don't tell us to learn from them. Our forest cover is currently at 54 per cent, and we've made significant progress. Last year, we

planted one million trees as part of our forestation campaign."

He also discussed regional cooperation, saying that Malaysia and its Asean partners were focusing on the Asean grid, which generates energy from renewable sources.

"We have 140,000 foreign students in our universities. I have visited many developing countries, and their leaders want to send their students and officers to learn from us, in fields like

semiconductors," he said.

To enhance the standard of education in Malaysia, Anwar said the government was working in tandem with the industry.

Among those present at the gathering were Malaysia's ambassador to Belgium, Luxembourg, and the European Union, Datuk Mohd Khalid Abbasi Abdul Razak, and president of the Malaysian Association in Belgium, Sarala Shambulingam.

Bernama