

**GOVT TO LOOK INTO WAYS TO TACKLE BRAIN DRAIN – PM ANWAR
YAB DATO' SERI ANWAR IBRAHIM
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NEW YORK, Sept 23 — The government is looking into ways to attract skilled Malaysians to return and contribute to the country in a move to address the threat of brain drain the country is facing now, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Anwar said the relevant ministries including International Trade and Industry Ministry (MITI), Economy Ministry and Higher Education Ministry are currently engaging those who can contribute to return and be placed at specific areas of competence to help Malaysia.

“I am sure this can be done, it is ongoing... and we should, as you know we are now encountering the problem of brain drain in the past years.

“Top scholars, top economists, top accountants are leaving (the country) or have left, so now we have to make sure that we have a system that could encourage them to come back with the incentives,” he said during a dinner with Malaysian diaspora and students here today.

Anwar, who arrived in the city on Wednesday, had earlier delivered Malaysia’s National Statement at the 78th United Nations General Assembly.

Meanwhile, Anwar said the government has set up a committee to review the salary scheme of public servants but any restructuring need to be done according to the country’s financial position.

“What I have inherited is RM1.5 trillion debt, 5.6 per cent deficit, which means if I’m a responsible leader, I have to gradually reduce the debt.

“...and if we are responsible in terms of prudent economic policy, then we will have to reduce the deficit, from 5.6 last year to 5.3 this year, and hoping to reach 5 in 2024,” he said.

On the question of dual citizenship, Anwar said the matter will be discussed further by assessing the implications of the implementation as it would involve a major policy decision.

“The Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Home Affairs will put up a paper and will discuss its implications. For now we are not in favour but since there were requests, we’ll at least look at it and see whether we need to adjust or not,” he said.

Anwar was asked if there was a possibility for the government to allow dual citizenship to encourage Malaysian professionals living abroad to contribute to the country’s development, without having to choose between their homeland and adopted countries.

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