

Transparency the key

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Open scrutiny of govt plans will encourage investment, says PM

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NANNING: Malaysia has recommended its policy of transparency and open scrutiny of government plans and policies to China and other Asean countries as a means to increase investment in their countries.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said greater information flow and transparency, especially on economic and industrial development, was vital.

"Information of this nature, especially when they pertain to new opportunities and changes to rules and regulations, must be shared with and disseminated to the private sector in a systematic and effective manner," he said.

In Malaysia, he said, it was a practice that government plans, such as the Third Industrial Master Plan and Ninth Malaysia Plan, were open to public scrutiny.

"I recommend this Malaysian example to China and to other Asean countries," he said in his keynote address at the Third China-Asean Business and Investment Summit here yesterday.

The summit is being held in the capital of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region in conjunction with a two-day commemorative summit marking the 15th anniversary of the

Asean-China dialogue relations.

Pointing to the Chinese government's decision to make the Bohai Rim region in northern China as the next focus for growth, Abdullah said more

information about this venture should be made available.

"The private sector can then begin to plan their own strategies and establish priorities," he said.

Abdullah said he would urge investment agencies in Asean and China to strengthen cooperation among themselves.

"They should conduct regular dialogue to provide the pri-

vate sector with up-to-date information on investment opportunities in each of these areas," he said, adding that the East Asia Business Council would be a good forum for interaction among business communities.

Abdullah said another area which needed attention was the early conclusion of the Asean-China agreement on investment.

"This agreement is an important pillar of the overall Asean-China Free Trade Area arrangement," he said.

He added that the agreement would set out the parameters for creating a more transparent investment climate between Asean and China.

Abdullah said there was also a need for Asean and China to set up mechanisms to facilitate trade and investment.

"Such a mechanism will in fact become imperative once the Asean-China Free Trade Area arrangement becomes ready for full implementation," he said.

Abdullah also called on Asean and Chinese businesses to continue providing feedback and proposals on how to overcome impediments and to enhance economic links.

"I have no doubt that trade and investment between Asean and China can be further enhanced," he said.