PM: China's no easy pot of gold

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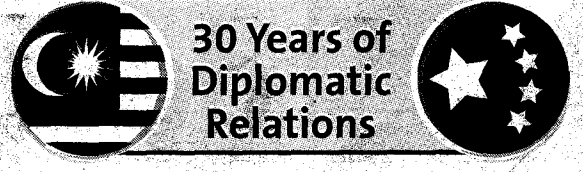
SHANGHAI: Malaysian companies must venture into China but should not treat the world's most populous country as an easy pot of gold, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said.

"Malaysia certainly cannot afford to ignore and miss out on the developments in China, as the Chinese economy is increasingly shaping up to be the fulcrum of the global economy.

"However, I would caution Malaysian businessmen against jumping on the China bandwagon simply for the sake of wanting 'to be in China.'

"You must invest your presence in China, and not expect to conclude deals within short business meetings. There are no short cuts and there is no easy pot of gold here," said Abdullah in his luncheon address before some 400 Chinese and Malaysian business leaders here, yesterday.

He added that there were still Malaysian businessmen who thought of China simply as a large market of one billion people.



Reminding them to build up networks and relationships, he said Malaysians needed to be more sophisticated in their understanding and appreciation of China.

"You need to grasp the intricacies of the different provinces as each has a different economic profile, core industries and players as well as physical and financial infrastructure," he added.

He urged Chinese businessmen to tap the opportunities in Malaysia, especially its rich resources and skill base as well as it being a gateway to the 550 million people of Asean.

Addressing the Malaysian attraction for Chinese businesses, Abdullah said besides being in Asean, Malaysia was a platform for them to venture into India and OIC member countries, which had strong business networks and excellent bilateral relations with Malaysia.

"Given our multi-lingual and multi-cultural capabilities, Malaysia can function as an integrated marketing and customer service centre for Chinese companies," he added.

Abdullah reaffirmed Malaysia's belief in China's commitment to economic reforms and ability to adhere to WTO obligations.

"I am pleased to announce Malaysia's recognition of China as a full market economy.

"We have much to gain by partnering and sharing.

"I, therefore, look forward to the fruits of the Malaysia-China partnership, as we invest in our collective future together," he added.