

# KERATAN AKHBAR

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## PM: Economy on the right track



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim presenting the 2024 Tokoh Kraf Negara Award to Bangie Anak Embol for her 'Pua' woven textile craft. With them is Tourism, Arts and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Tiong King Sing (left). PIC BY HAIRUL ANUAR RAHIM

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## PM: ECONOMY ON THE RIGHT TRACK

Most significant move was requiring trade with China to be conducted in ringgit, says Anwar

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**M**ALAYSIA'S economy is on the right track despite concerns about the sliding ringgit, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim yesterday.

Anwar said the nation received the most investments in its history last year.

He added that it had also witnessed lower rates of unemployment and inflation, with stronger economic growth in spite of the slowing global economy.

Malaysia's most significant move was requiring commercial transactions with China to be conducted in ringgit, which lessened reliance on the United States currency.

"Twenty-five per cent of trade transactions with China are done in ringgit and Chinese yuan, as well as 18 per cent with Indonesia and Thailand 20 per cent in local

currencies.

"While we are looking at improving this, the situation should not be used as political attacks that are not based on facts.

"We must not condemn others as we please and instead, get the correct facts while showing compassion and understanding (towards others)," he said in his speech at the Restu Global Quranic Arts Festival (ReGQAF) launch yesterday.

He said one of the earliest *kitab* (religious books) that the Islamic Development Department (Jakim) had been instructed to print under the current government was *Ethics of Disagreement in Islam*.

In nurturing the Quran generation that embraces good values, the Education Ministry would be distributing Imam Nawawi's *40 Hadith* book to school students, he said.

"While embracing Madani in economy, it is equally important that the country strengthen good values and humanity.

"What is the point of having skyscrapers if the (welfare of the) people are ignored; what is the meaning of having big factories if the employees are stressed with low wages?" he said.

In another development, Anwar said maintenance and upgrading of tourism industry facilities must be expedited to meet the increasing number of tourists

in the country.

He said these included the Kuala Lumpur International Airport as well as the airports in Penang and Tawau.

Anwar added that the synergy between ministries and agencies needed to be improved to ensure the tourism industry remained competitive on the global stage.

"(We are receiving tourists) not just in Kota Kinabalu, Kuching, Penang, Alor Star and Kota Baru, but now also Tawau, too.

"Tawau is not designed to receive international arrivals.

"So I want all these areas to be improved, including Tawau Airport and Penang Airport which are so crowded."

He said this at the launch of the 2024 National Craft Day at Kompleks Kraf here, yesterday.

Anwar said each state also played a role in boosting the tourism sector, including by promoting local handicraft.

"Handicraft can help improve the livelihood of the less fortunate. For example, there are Rungus people in Sabah who get orders for their beadwork all the way from Italy."

Present were Tourism, Arts and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Tiong King Sing and his deputy, Khairul Firdaus Akbar Khan.

At the event, Anwar presented the 2024 Tokoh Kraf Negara Award to Bangie Anak Embol for her "Pua" woven textile craft.