



'PM's moderation approach attracts foreign investors'

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KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's non-confrontational and moderation approach has attracted foreign investors and benefitted the people, analysts said.

Universiti Utara Malaysia College of Law, Government and International Studies, Associate Professor Dr Ahmad Martadha Mohamad said the nation's economy was booming, with foreign investors coming in due to the country's stability.

"We are friendly with foreign investors.

"If you were to analyse the economic situation, we scored a lot of investments due to our moderate approach.

"Many countries are interested to invest because of our moderate approach, not only in our political system, but also when it comes to issues related to religion, ethnicity, and also because we don't take any controversial stand," he said, adding that Middle Eastern countries were emulating the nation's moderate approach.

Ahmad said there was a stark contrast between Najib's foreign policy and that of Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamed, who was known for his confrontational approach.

He said the opposition leader would likely continue using his combative approach if appointed as prime minister.

He said tinkering with foreign policy might push away investors and cause the people to lose all the benefits that they were enjoying.

"Tun M's (Dr Mahathir) approach is more direct... confrontational, and that is why we had problems with Australia, England, the United States and European countries.

"We cannot afford to become confrontational because our economy depends on superpowers like China, the US and the European Union.

"So, we need to have a stand that is more welcoming. Therefore, it is best that we maintain our moderation approach."

When asked about attacks on Malaysia-China ties, Ahmad said Malaysia could not afford to sour relations with China, an economic superpower.

"It is important to have positive relations with China because we can benefit from them, not only in terms of economic development, but also security."

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia's Institute of Malaysian and International Studies deputy director Dr Sufian Jusoh said Najib's non-confrontational approach should not be considered his weakness.

"Economic diplomacy involves building good relations.

"The world has changed and there are more countries taking this approach to promote themselves as investment destinations.

"Najib has taken a proactive and firm stand on the issue of Palestine, Rohingya and extremism.

"This shows a smart use of diplomacy," he said.

Counterterrorism and security expert Andrin Raj said Malaysian authorities had been engaging and working with Asean regional security agencies to counter terrorism.

Raj, who is also the region's regional director for the International Association for Counterterrorism and Security Professionals, said cooperation between enforcement agencies in the region had proven to be fruitful, with many planned attacks foiled.

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