

**Anwar vows to safeguard nation's assets and economy**  
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Opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim, has pledged a better management of the country's assets and economy and no leaders will be allowed to enrich themselves if Pakatan Rakyat comes to power.

In his five-minute New Year video message, Anwar said this was the promise or pledge that he is making, although it may not seem big.

"My small promise to you is that the nation's assets will be managed properly as no robbery will be allowed. A minister, or the prime minister or ruling elite, would not be allowed to enrich themselves in taking the country's assets and not be held accountable," he said.

"That is our pledge to the people in 2013 and we hope that this is attainable when the country is geared for elections early this year," he said.

Citing the negative reports on corruption and outflow of illicit funds from the country which involves billions of ringgit as highlighted in the Wall Street Journal and the Global Financial Integrity Report, he said this requires immediate attention.

These reports, he said are shocking but do not leave an impression on the ruling elite in Umno and BN.

"We must ensure that the leaders stop robbing the country's assets and that the ruling elite would not enrich themselves, their family members or their cronies from the country's finances and that the management of the economy would be better," he said.

"If the economy is better managed, I am confident there will be equitable distribution of income and there would not be unhappiness among the races of being sidelined in not getting a portion of the economic pie," he said.

The Global Financial Report lists Malaysia as the second biggest country after China to have money transferred out in the region of close to RM200 billion.

Transparency International also lists Malaysia as among the highest in an international survey, where company competitors responded that they lose out on business due to bribery.

Free education for all

Anwar who is also Permatang Pauh MP, also pledged to provide free education for all from primary school to the tertiary level by properly managing the economy.

For those who cannot or are unable to go to the university, Anwar pledged there would be various opportunities given to them to enrich their skills.

"There are those who question that the pledge is made because the election is looming. I do not hold that view as we have the capability and the economic strength through the gas reserves, palm oil, and revenue from income tax.

"The problem is the management of the economy, and I focus on education as this are pressing issue in the early part of they year. We will also focus on issues like housing, health, and ensuring price stability," he said.

He said by focusing on education regardless of their ethnicity, religion or social standing, the nation can help build on their human capital to thrust the nation forward.

Meanwhile, PAS spiritual adviser and Kelantan Menteri Besar Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat (right), in his New Year's message, urged the people to renew their determination to fight tyranny and replace it with justice.

Nik Abdul Aziz hopes that Islam would be practised as secularism in politics had destroyed the nation.

If this is allowed to continue further, he said, Malays would continue to be neglected, and Islam would also go nowhere.

"This year, 2013, will also see the 13th general election being called. Use your power and wisdom to vote wisely. Do not make the wrong choice, or else you will regret your decision in this life and the hereafter.

"Be convinced that all parts of the body including your limbs and hands will bear witness when they are asked come Judgement Day (di Padang Mahsyar)," he said.

Lim: 2013 a momentous year

DAP secretary-general and Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng described 2013 as being a momentous year on whether Malaysians have the courage to change a 56-year-old government that is afraid of new ideas, lost its ideals and turned its back on principles of justice, freedom, truth, democracy and integrity in governance.

Lim (left) said the looming 13th GE should be a contest between which party or coalition can deliver Malaysia's promise of success to those who are honest, work hard, invest in the future and follow rules in a Malaysia that is clean, green, safe and healthy.

"If Malaysia is to get back on track, both economically and in political rights, 2013 should be about the people and performance, not about who is more racist and extreme," he said.

Lim pointed out that three Asean countries had surpassed expectations as their people-

centric approach that focussed on performance had helped uplift their economies.

Thailand, he said, has exceeded all expectations especially in tourism, with the highest growth as the No 1 tourist destination, and in 2012 its stock market was the best performer in Asia. The Philippines had excelled in its manufacturing and achieved an economic growth of more than six percent; while Indonesia is the star performer with its impressive growth.

All three countries, he noted, benefit from a young population that is more skilled and a government that places more importance on economics than politics, and prefers performance and practical policies over racial and religious extremism and handling corruption.

"If Malaysians are to overcome those who wish to split us into racial and religious boxes, we must remind ourselves that despite our diversity and different cultural past, we are also bonded by the history of Merdeka and the federal constitution since 1957, of shared values and millions of familiar attachments.

"To bridge divisions, build trust and broaden support to allow all Malaysians to connect with each other, policies must not only be legally valid but also possess moral, popular and political legitimacy.

"Malaysians should take note of these three countries' successes and ensure that bad behaviour not be rewarded but punished and reject BN with corruption in their DNA. Lies and fear tactics that change will bring about a Christian state or an Islamic state can no longer work when ultimately what makes people's lives better is the key performance indicator that counts," he said.

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