

**YOURSAY | People want an end to the culture of corruption**

**Malaysiakini**

**28 February 2023**

**Yoursay**

YOURSAY | 'Even if Anwar wanted to steal, there is not much left.'

Proarte: The question is not whether Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim will steal but whether he will dismantle the system which allows corruption to fester and destroy our country. The future of Malaysia is dependent on instituting wide-ranging reforms and allowing freedom of expression and creativity to flourish.

Former prime minister Mahathir Mohamad claims he did not steal, and enforcement agencies have not gone after him, giving credence to what he says. But Mahathir created an ecosystem which allowed his cronies to steal in a big way, and that is the real issue - not whether an individual leader steals but whether the "system" allows kleptocracy to thrive at all levels.

We need to nurture an intellectual culture and that means not co-opting citizenry to genuflect to the "system" but instead encouraging honest and open debate on any issue, of course, all within the law. The law, however, should be

compassionate and civilised and never aim to curtail divergent points of view to that of the powers that be.

Man on the Silver Mountain: Unfortunately, corruption takes on many faces. The “rakyat” are quite tired of the inevitable feeling of déjà vu. Every new government of Malaysia started with high words, but the practice just repeated itself. It was the same old, same old. Perhaps, that was because corruption has become steeped in our culture. It was accepted.

For example, government contractors were expected to make money out of contracts. It was nothing to do with their capability but rather, with whom they knew and on the account of their ethnicity. It would be not normal if contractors did not make money out of government projects. That was, of course, the root of corruption. In normal circumstances, established companies will accept both outcomes of contracts, whether profitable or not. If they lose in one project, they hope to profit in another. But that is because they are established companies instead of being names on paper only.

The “rakyat’s” hope now is that if Anwar can change this culture. That will be a giant step, and with the unity government, he is not in a position to do it single-handedly. All he could do is to govern as usual but with minimal loss.

Coward: Anwar will be extremely stupid to steal. First and foremost, he would have squandered his legacy should he do that. Former prime minister Mahathir Mohamad's second stint as prime minister is a good warning for him. This is the most convincing reason, about an irrational one, why I believe he will not steal.

Secondly, while he will get help from insiders, it will still take time to set up the network of middle man to steal and he might not have enough time to build up this network. Compared to 1MDB, Jana Wibawa and other emerging scandals look like hatchet jobs.

They knew time is of the essence and could not be more refined in their approach. Anwar's legacy could still be brought down by corruption in his administration. Everyone is watching Umno president Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and Umno ministers like a hawk. We are expecting them to steal. The only difference is they are unlikely to be as bold and blatant as before.

As for those from Pakatan Harapan? Power corrupts. We won't have a clue where and when it will happen until it hits us. The difference between UK and Malaysia is there is no tolerance for corruption there by any party. Their civil service is also fiercely independent unlike those here that turn with the wind.

Headhunter: Veteran Sarawak editor Francis Paul Siah should not be too quick to

jump the gun. He may be right, but only time will tell. After all, what happened to the accolades we bestowed on our past prime ministers and other "illustrious" leaders including civil servants whom we admired and thought were the finest examples the country could offer? They robbed and plundered to enrich themselves!

Temptation is hard to resist especially when billions are placed in front of you. The only deterrent is the fear of being caught red-handed. But then some got away for so long that they think what belongs to the "rakyat" is theirs for the taking. I don't need to give example because they are so many of our leaders and civil servants, both past and present and their immediate families living way beyond their means.

Hopefully, Anwar gets reminded of his predecessors, all of whom had their reputations sullied beyond repair by their greed, and shows himself to be as honest as our first prime minister, the beloved late Tunku Abdul Rahman whose legacy is still intact and respected by the people to this very day.

Anonymous\_3e12: How does the present unity government be able to reform to cripple the system of corruption. The pervasiveness of corruption in our country is epic. Until and unless the culture of corruption is changed, the future of corruption without impunity will remain. Anwar may be "clean" but what about

our future leaders?

YellowDove1483: I think we trust him to a certain extent but, no matter what, he needs to know that all eyes will be on him. Any scandal and he will have it worse than other prime ministers due to his own “reformasi” party and the sheer number of people hoping for a clean government placing their trust in him.

BrownMacaw9225: Even if Anwar wanted to steal, there is not much left. So it is best if he keeps his fingers out of the cookie jar.

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Source: <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/656710>