

## **Anwar acknowledges flaws, pledges to improve IMD ranking**

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PARLIAMENT | Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim has admitted to his government's weaknesses following Malaysia's seven-spot drop in the 2024 International Institute for Management Development (IMD) World Competitiveness Ranking.

During the Prime Minister's Question Time session, Anwar acknowledged the report and called for a more transparent approach to governance.

He said he had instructed the cabinet to thoroughly examine the report and openly discuss its findings rather than adopt a defensive stance.

"There are weaknesses that need to be fixed. (But) I want to point out that, in general, the report mentioned that our economy is still stable.

"I admit that there are things that need to be looked at for us to improve," he told the Dewan Rakyat today.

Malaysia dropped to 34th place this year from 27th place last year in the IMD

ranking, a comprehensive annual report and worldwide reference point on countries' competitiveness.

Previously, former premier Muhyiddin Yassin slammed Anwar on the matter, stating the drop served as a clarion call for the prime minister to quit being a "master spinner."

Investment, Trade and Industry Minister Tengku Zafrul Abdul Aziz previously stated that the ranking will improve as the country is now driven by the increase in high-technology product exports.

### **Underperforming ministers**

Anwar remained silent when asked whether a cabinet reshuffle was necessary due to the fall in ranking.

Afnan Hamimi Taib Azamudden (PN-Alor Setar), who posed the question to Anwar, said the index ranking reflects his cabinet, and while the premier has been working hard, there are underperforming ministers.

"It appears that some ministers lack not only competitiveness but also capability. We worry that the leader may end up pulling the train alone, with the carriages left behind.

“When he turns around, he sees no carriages. So, will the prime minister replace the damaged and slow carriages with new ones so we can progress?” he asked.

At a function with the American Malaysian Chamber of Commerce later today, Anwar joked that he’d be “forced” to do a minor cabinet reshuffle if Malaysia’s competitiveness ranking does not improve next year.

This is after the government adopted measures that were deemed necessary but unpopular, such as targeted diesel subsidies and revising electricity tariffs.

“One major criticism is our failure, or at least lack of determination (and) commitment, to undertake some seemingly unpopular measures, but we did.

“So, to my mind, that will resolve the second major component of the criticism against the economic performance in Malaysia. I hope, InsyaAllah (God willing), we will register a much better report next year.

“Otherwise, I'd be forced to make a minor reshuffle in the cabinet. That's the only way to save the prime minister,” he said with laughter.

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