

'GIVE GOVT TIME TO GET RID OF KLEPTOCRACY'

Eliminating corrupt practices, ensuring good governance will see increased revenue, says PM

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DATUK Seri Anwar Ibrahim has asked for time to prove that the unity government can practise good governance and do away with the *sakau* practice.

The prime minister said he needed a few years to do so.

According to Anwar, the success in eliminating corrupt practices would lead to an increase in the country's revenue and enable the government to share its wealth with the people.

"The government needs to get rid of corrupt practices or kleptocracy, which involves certain individuals and the system. This is not something easy as corrupt practices or kleptocracy has spread to all levels of the government administration.

"We are not only known as a country with diverse races or impressive economic performance, but also for the 1MDB scandal," he said yesterday.

The prime minister was attending a get-together with federal and state civil servants at Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) Permatang Pauh yesterday.

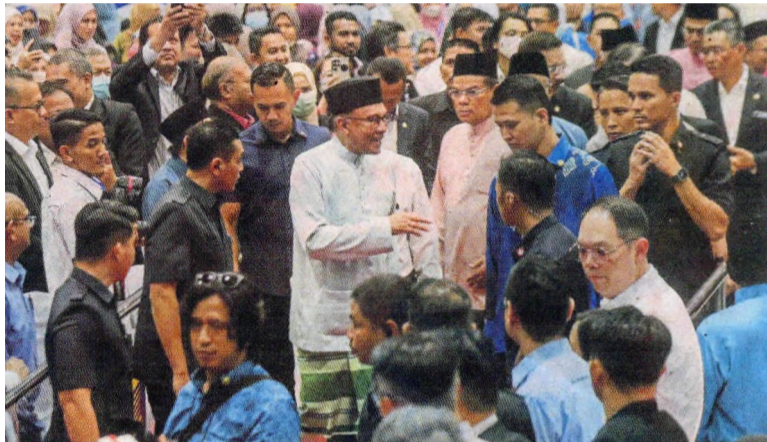
Present was Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow.

Elaborating, Anwar said since he came into office, he had opened several government files and found decisions made in the past year or two that he suspected had involved fraud and greed by past leaders.

"I don't care if they are Chinese or Malay or from which party. I have asked the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) to act professionally with data and facts.

"If there is a case, the attorney-general can take action to prosecute as a lesson to others," he added.

Anwar said it was important for the federal and Penang government to ensure political stability and work as a team to face the



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim meeting federal and state civil servants at UiTM's Permatang Pauh campus yesterday, PIC BY DANIAL SAAD

next state election.

"I ask the people to understand our need to defend the Penang government and make sure that the state is strong so that it can help us further strengthen the unity government at the federal level," he said.

Earlier, Anwar gave the federal government's commitment to work with all state governments, particularly the opposition-led states, to ensure the wellbeing of the people was upheld.

He said they could fight during the general election, but they should make up after that for the sake of the people.

"During the general election, they can fight. After that, be at peace. Only then, can they look after the people.

"This is the spirit I hope for. Any difference, we should not allow it to create a rift in our relationship," he said in his speech at the launch of the Mengkuang Titi Mosque project.

As such, Anwar said there was no basis in him being accused of cruelty for not providing equal allocation for opposition-led states.

"Instead, states like Kelantan, Terengganu, Kedah and Perlis continue to get increased allocations.

"I just met the menteri besar of Kelantan yesterday (Thursday), where we discussed flood mitigation projects.

"I agreed to increase the allocation for the Sungai Golok flood mitigation project because the flooding issue in Kelantan is severe.

"The menteri besar had a few suggestions. I jotted them down and gave orders immediately.

This is a fact and is not something fictitious.

"I will be going to Terengganu tomorrow to meet the menteri besar. I also want to meet officers from the federal government. The state government has given its assurance that it will also give its cooperation," he added.

Anwar announced a RM5.4 million allocation for the construction of the Mengkuang Titi mosque.

Besides the allocation from the federal government, the Penang government also approved RM1.1 million towards the construction of the mosque, which was scheduled to be completed in 2025.

Another RM2.5 million had been raised by the mosque *kariah* (congregation) for the RM9 million project cost.

Anwar praised the mosque congregation, which took proactive steps to raise RM2.5 million.

"The remarkable thing about the Mengkuang Titi *kariah* is that they took steps when discussing with officials at the Implementation and Coordination Unit of the Finance Ministry. They noted that the community should be proactive by taking advice from the beginning until they successfully collect the RM2.5 million.

"This is a guarantee (to the community) and their efforts are great.

"Establishing this mosque is a shared responsibility and prospering the mosque is a call to all," he said.

With a two-storey building design, the proposed mosque will be built on 1.29 hectares owned by the Penang Religious Council and can accommodate 1,500 worshippers at any one time.