

## NEW YEAR GOALS

# REVITALISING ECONOMY IS PM'S 2024 FOCUS

Other focuses are energy transition and digital transformation, says Anwar

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**P**RIME Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said his primary focus in 2024 is revitalising the nation's economy.

This, he said, would entail attracting domestic and foreign investments that were linked to good governance, ease of doing business and reducing bureaucracy.

"Our priority for 2024 is, certainly, the economy, economy, economy," he said during a dialogue session with chief editors and senior editors of the country's electronic, print and online media here yesterday.

The "no holds barred" session, held at the Seri Perdana Complex here, featured journalists from various publications nationwide, including Sabah and Sarawak.

For more than an hour, Anwar, who is also finance minister, fielded a host of hard-hitting questions, ranging from the country's economics projection for next year, the unity government's relations with Umno heading into the 16th General Election and his relationship with the incoming Yang di-Pertuan Agong, Sultan Ibrahim Sultan Iskandar.

Analysts had forecast firmer

economic growth for Malaysia in 2024, describing it as a "take off" year, with execution and implementation of blueprints, masterplans and roadmaps, coupled with fiscal reforms and economic restructuring, high on the government's agenda.

Anwar said the current political stability would allow the administration to fully focus on developing and expanding the country's economy next year.

Recapping his administration's one year in power, he said although it was a challenging experience, he was proud that the parties in the unity government had given their full cooperation.

"The measures we adopted, be it governance, fighting corruption, setting transparent rules in procurement and Madani programmes, economy and other programmes, faced no problems," said Anwar.

Apart from the economy, he said other focuses were the energy transition and digital transformation, which require a strong paradigm shift.

He said in the context of education, the mastery of Bahasa Melayu must be upheld, while the English language will also be given emphasis next year.

"The quality of training either in TVET (technical and vocational education and training), AI (artificial intelligence) must be further enhanced.

"Economic programmes are related to the issues that I mentioned in the Madani nation principles, such as boosting command of English, education and mastery of new disciplines, such as AI.

"Our focus is to manage, repair and enhance the country. We are not that far behind (from other

countries), so we have to address our weaknesses and improve."

To a question, Anwar said he could not deny that some of his first cabinet's members took their time and grappled with some of their new responsibilities.

He said after a year, there was now a better understanding of how some issues transcend a single ministry.

Digital transformation, for instance, spans the entire government and nation.

"It has to be in line with present thinking, which means it must be linked to all agencies when it comes to digital issues."

He said in this respect, local talents and expertise must be engaged and complement the government sector, as well as integrating and synergising with foreign experts.

He commended Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, who chaired a committee to integrate TVET programmes.

He said the government spent RM6.8 billion a year for TVET under various ministries and departments.

"Once they are set up, they function like warlords, you don't interfere. There's this understanding.

"But he (Zahid) managed to cut across and have a synergy between TVET and private companies in various fields," he said, citing the collaboration between the government and private sector in AI.

He said the country had the capacity to carry out the energy transition, including in green and renewable energy, but Malaysia still needed to work with foreign companies in sharing expertise.