

'We'll wipe out graft, no one is above the law'

PUTRAJAYA: The fight against corruption remains a priority in the administration of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, who reiterated that no one, including notable figures, can escape the law when it comes to graft.

Describing the issue as a systemic problem, the Prime Minister said a clear signal must be sent that no one was above the law where corruption is concerned.

"You can be a Tun or a Tan Sri. If there is compelling and incontrovertible evidence to support the case, the authorities will act," he said at a dialogue with editors of the print, electronic and online media.

At the session, Anwar also spoke about his relations with the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa

Billah Shah and his close ties with the next King, Sultan Ibrahim Almarhum Sultan Iskandar.

"I am extremely grateful to have close relations with Al-Sultan Abdullah.

"I believe I will continue to have good relations with the Sultan of Johor when he becomes the Yang di-Pertuan Agong.

"Relations' between the Prime Minister and the Yang di-Pertuan Agong must be good to help in governance," he added.

Anwar said he welcomed discussions to be held with the Sultan of Johor on matters that are of the country's interest.

On the high-speed rail link (HSR), he said the project should proceed but there might be changes made to its terms and alignment.

He said the government was looking into how to substantially lower the cost of the project.

Although there was no final decision, he said the government had agreed in principle to revive the project and this had been relayed to Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong.

"It does not make sense not to proceed as work has already started and we are paying the penalty.

"What we have done now is to make sure land acquisition starts, otherwise (if we wait longer), the cost will be exorbitant," the Prime Minister said.

Anwar said that he mentioned to Lee on exploring the possibility of continuing the project but also pointed out that the government's funds were limited and that its

priorities were on education, health, infrastructure, flood mitigation, besides having to increase expenditure allocation for Sabah and Sarawak.

"But if we could secure an arrangement where the cost of the project is lower, we will certainly proceed," he said.

Malaysia and Singapore inked bilateral agreements for the project on Dec 13, 2016.

However, the project, previously estimated at RM72bil, was put on the backburner in September 2018 with both sides agreeing to shelve it until Dec 21, 2020.

In March 2022, Malaysia announced it paid S\$102.8mil to Singapore for costs incurred by the republic for the development of HSR and the delays involved.