

NEW YEAR'S EVE ADDRESS

GROUP: ACT FIRMLY ON PM'S ANTI-GRAFT CALL

Those who abuse power must be removed, says corruption watchdog

QISTINA SALLEHUDDIN
AND FUAD NIZAM
KUALA LUMPUR
news@nst.com.my

Transparency international Malaysia (TI-M) said all quarters should take heed of the prime minister's call to address corruption, lest the country lose out on foreign investments.

Its president, Dr Muhammad Mohan, said the organisation welcomed Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's New Year message, where he emphasised the urgency of addressing corruption in the country, recovering stolen money and ensuring good governance in his administration.

However, he said, Anwar's words must be translated into "firm action" as only this would produce the desired results.

He also welcomed Anwar's assurances that the unity government would not interfere in investigations.

"This should send a clear message to enforcement agencies, such as MACC (the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission), that they should nab the corrupt whoever they are, without fear or favour."

On Anwar's reference to a small group of civil servants who continued to solicit and accept bribes, Muhammad said those who had been subjected to such abuses should lodge a report with the MACC.

"Those who abuse their positions need to be dealt with firmly, and removing them from the system would be a good start.

"TI M hopes that Anwar's words will be translated into firm action.

"This includes improved accountability on the part of the public sector, reduced leakages due to corruption and increased returns on public expenditure.

"In the long run, TI-M believes it can have a positive impact on Malaysia's economy, translating into improving our attractiveness as a destination for foreign direct investments."



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim speaking during the 'Munajat Ambang Tahun Baru' programme in Putrajaya on Saturday. PIC BY ASYRAF HAMZAH

Muhammad said Anwar's message was also timely, given that the country's Corruption Perception Index scores had been deteriorating in the last few years.

The index scores for 2022 will be released this month.

He was commenting on Anwar's address at the "Munajat Ambang Tahun Baru" programme on Saturday night.

In the address, Anwar vowed to put an end to the practice of using political positions to amass wealth.

He said appointed leaders should focus on taking care of the people's welfare and wellbeing.

"This is a reminder of the attacks against the unity government that we are amassing wealth.

"Particularly from someone who was once the finance minister and prime minister, where billions of ringgit were robbed from the country during his administration.

"It is not a small amount. So, I would like to remind you to at least return some of the money to the people.

"I would like to say that our conduct is clear here, and the enforcement bodies have been given full authority to oversee the matter," he said in comments believed to have been aimed at

former prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, who is serving a 12-year prison sentence for corruption.

Anwar also reminded government agencies to adopt a culture of moderation and preventing waste, in addition to ensuring all government-linked companies are monitored.

Anwar also said a small number of civil servants were still soliciting and accepting bribes.

"I realise that there are still small sections (in the civil service) that are still trying to accept bribes and big gifts.

"I request full cooperation from all of you and will not tolerate such behaviour that has brought down and tarnished the nation's image for so long."

Anwar added that he would not tolerate negligence by civil servants and cabinet members that would lead to the destruction of the nation.

"This is a great slander against civil servants who have changed and understood (what I have said before).

"I hope there will be repentance and change, or stern action will be taken.

"This is because we cannot allow 'termites' to threaten and undermine the foundation of our nation's governance."



Dr Muhammad Mohan