

'Plugging procurement system leakage will save RM10b'

PUTRAJAYA: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar. Ibrahim said the country could save up to RM10 billion from the leakages that occurred in the government procurement system.

Anwar, who is the finance minister, said leakages could be stopped if corruption is eradicated at all levels, including changing the old way of doing things, namely without political interference or the interests of big businessmen in government procurement.

"We are experiencing high leakages. In less than two months at the Ministry of Finance, I have identified RM3 billion to RM4 billion that can be saved," he said at the 2023 Budget Dialogue Council themed *Membangun Malaysia Madani* here yesterday.

Also present were Deputy Finance Ministers Datuk Seri Ahmad Maslan and Steven Sim Chee Keong, Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Mohd Zuki Ali and deputy secretary-general of Treasury (Policy) Datuk Johan Mahmood Merican.

Anwar said from his experience, leakages could be reduced if procurement matters are handed to parties capable of dealing with issues such as floods, Bernama reported.

Meanwhile, Anwar said Budget 2023 should focus on restoring the confidence of domestic and foreign investors as well as expediting the approval of investment.

"For example, a proposal to introduce an organic farm by a company took two years to be approved.

"Granting approval should be faster and the heads of departments should be held fully accountable in the event of delays and face action for affecting the national economy," he said.

The government will present the revised Budget 2023 in Parliament on Feb 24.

On another matter, the prime minister said he has no intention of building new landmarks under

> Problem could be stopped if corruption eradicated at all levels and changing 'old way' of doing things, says Anwar

his administration.

He added that the existing landmarks such as the Petronas Twin Towers and the TRX Towers were sufficient.

"Instead, the cleanliness and beauty of the city should be improved and the needs of the small and medium enterprises (SME), hawkers and stall operators, should be looked into," he said.

The prime minister said based on his observations at eateries on Friday, less attention was given to the SME and hawkers.

On a different note, Anwar said the ministers' asset declarations must be made in a responsible and transparent manner rather than just a political gimmick.

He said he was in discussion with various agencies including the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission to make the asset declaration processes more transparent.

"Declaration of assets was a farce in the past as far as I'm concerned. You can find people having hundreds of millions of ringgit and

still declaring RM11 million or RM12 million. So I think what we need to do is to make sure parameters are clear."

Anwar added that after looking at the figures and files, some of the declarations did not represent the real wealth of a particular person.

On the status of targeted subsidies, Anwar said follow-up actions have been taken, such as targeted electricity tariffs for the low and medium-income groups, as well as for those in the agricultural sector and small and medium industries.

"There have been actions (on targeted subsidies). Even though the previous government had announced an increase (in tariffs), we have cancelled the plan and taken a new approach," he said.



Anwar said he has no intention of building new landmarks during his administration. - BERNAMAPIC