

GOVT WANTS LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

Study on monopolies, adjustments will allow fair competition among Bumi firms too, says PM



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PUTRAJAYA will be reviewing all current monopolies in an effort to provide a competitive and level playing field for everyone involved.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said all ministries had been asked to study existing monopolies under their purview in the spirit of promoting transparent economic development and fair competition.

"This requires us to make some adjustments, and a shift from a system I consider to be chaotic, obsolete, and that serves only vested interests.

"What is the rationale behind the decision to grant monopolies?

"All ministries have been asked to conduct a review, to ensure that the public are given better service at competitive prices."

Anwar said the government was not reneging on its commitment to assist Bumiputera companies.

He said such initiatives must not only be transparent and fair, but also allow for fair competition among Bumiputera businesses.

"If our concern is to protect the interests of the Bumiputera, then make it very clear and transparent, and let them compete," he said at a media conference at the end of his three-day official visit to Saudi Arabia.

The prime minister was asked on the announcement by Putrajaya that it would end the decades-old monopoly of Puspakom — the sole company appointed by the government to conduct mandatory inspections on both commercial and private vehicles — next year. Puspakom was established in 1994.



A motorist paying toll with a Touch 'n Go (TnG) card. Last Monday, the government said it would review TnG monopolies. FILE PIC

Last week, Anwar, who is finance minister, said the government would be reviewing all monopolies held by Touch 'n Go (TnG) since 1997.

He said that there had not been any significant improvements in its services since its inception.

"TnG has been in operation for around two decades, but there has not been any convincing progress," he was quoted as saying.

Meanwhile, the prime minister said Malaysia's relentless campaign to stem corruption and promote transparency had paved a clearer path for the country in attracting foreign investments.

Anwar, who had been engaging with the global business community during his foreign visits since assuming the premiership in November, said they were encouraged by the stability that is now in place in Malaysia.

Anwar said the country's captains of industry had said that they were pleased with the developments in Malaysia and were looking forward to visit the country in May to look at investment opportunities.

The Islamic Development Bank (ISDB), Jeddah Chamber of Commerce and Industry, as well as leaders of the Saudi business

community represented in the National Business Chambers of Commerce, were among those committed to doing business in Malaysia.

"They were pleased with the political developments in Malaysia. This was what they had been waiting for.

"They know Malaysia very well, as they have been here since the 1980s and 90s. They have been waiting for stability; a clear direction and commitment to ensure the ease of doing business, end corruption, and for good governance.

"This would immensely benefit not only the people, but also the investing community," he said, adding that among the areas they were keen on included food security, oil and gas, as well as tourism and the services industry.

Anwar said the political stability was reinforced by the commitment of the three pillars of *kerajaan perpaduan* (unity government) — Pakatan Harapan, Barisan Nasional, and Gabungan Parti Sarawak.

"The fact remains that the government is certainly stable. And in ho uncertain terms, will the parties renege on their commitment to ensure stability," said Anwar.