



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim says exports rose by 8.7 per cent in January and that unemployment has dropped to the pre-pandemic level of 3.3 per cent. BERNAMA PIC

GOOD OUTLOOK

'ECONOMY IS GROWING BUT WE CAN IMPROVE'

RM76.1 billion in potential FDIs so far this year, economic growth expected to be 4-5pc, says PM

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DATUK Seri Anwar Ibrahim said all the signs point to a growing economy, but there is room for improvement.

The prime minister said among the indicators was the amount of foreign investments into the country.

Anwar, who is also finance minister, said Malaysia had attracted RM76.1 billion in potential foreign investments so far this year.

"This comes from the success of our trade and investment missions to Australia, France and Germany," he said during the Finance Ministry's monthly assembly yesterday.

Anwar said the economy was expected to grow between four and five per cent this year and that unemployment had dropped to the pre-pandemic level of 3.3 per cent in January.

Exports in January also showed signs of recovery after rising by 8.7 per cent.

"Malaysia's economic fundamentals continue to remain strong and the economic outlook for 2024 is better than 2023.

"This is the result of early preparations by the Finance Min-

istry, Investment, Trade and Industry Ministry, Foreign Ministry and other government agencies.

"Having said that, there is room for improvement. It is not that we are pursuing perfection but as stated in Islam, we must continue to strive for excellence."

Anwar reminded civil servants to not only continue upholding their religious obligations but also strive to improve and uphold their integrity

"(Do not be an irresponsible person who) still *sakau* (misappropriates) although he or she is fasting, and then use the monies to perform umrah next year."

Anwar hit out at an opposition leader for claiming that the Federal Government was cruel to Terengganu over parliamentary allocations and *wangihisan* (compassionate payments).

Anwar did not name anyone, but Terengganu Menteri Besar and Kemaman member of parliament Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Samsuri Mokhtar on March 6 criticised the government in Parliament over unpaid oil monies.

Samsuri said Terengganu had yet to receive almost RM1 billion from the Federal Government.

Anwar said allocations for Terengganu from the unity government was higher than under other federal administrations, including those led by Perikatan Nasional, of which the Pas vice-president was a part of.

Anwar said the Federal Government had approved RM786 million in compassionate payments for Terengganu based on revenue generated from the petroleum industry in the state in 2023.

"Apart from the *wang ihsan*

payment, the federal government has fulfilled its pledge of distributing RM413.64 million in federal grants to Terengganu in 2023.

"The amount is higher than the RM399 million in federal grants received by Terengganu the previous year.

"And in 2024, there will be more (funds for Terengganu). So how are we being cruel?"

The unity government, said Anwar, had never withheld funds from any of the states, including Terengganu.

"We never took the money and gave it to other ministries, departments or other states.

"The fund (*wangihisan*) is all for Terengganu, Kelantan, Sabah and Sarawak," he said.

On the allocation for parliamentary constituencies, Anwar said the funds were channelled directly to the people instead of through MPs.

"We will focus on those in the hardcore poverty category. And there is no favouritism in this.

"We will help them all, irrespective of their race and religion, constituencies or (political) parties," he said.

Anwar also took a swipe at opposition leaders who continued to harp on the issue despite the explanation by Finance Minister II Datuk Seri Amir Hamzah Azizan.

"When we were the opposition for many years, I did not receive any allocation, including during the time when Umno-Pas-Bersatu were in power.

"At the time, it was not considered cruel. Why is it considered cruel now?"