

PM: NO PRESSURE TO DROP NAJIB'S TRIAL

No quick fix for excesses, but govt has checked abuse of wealth by leaders, says Anwar

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THERE is no pressure from any party to stop Datuk Seri Najib Razak's corruption trial, said

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Anwar said he had not been pressured to interfere in the 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) case, despite Umno being part of the unity government, "Najib is still undergoing a major trial now on corruption charges. (Part of the unity government) coalition is from his party, but there is no pressure on me to stop the trial of the ongoing case," he told Al Jazeera's Sami Zeidan in the *Talk To Al Jazeera* programme, which was aired yesterday.

During the interview, he was asked to respond to criticism that his government's economic and democratic reforms had slowed down, and since taking office, he had prioritised stabilising the coalition over investigating powerful people for corruption.

He said it was not possible to correct "decades of excesses" in just



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, in the 'Talk To Al Jazeera' programme, says it is up to the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission to investigate anyone who amassed billions while in power. PIC

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a year and a half of being in power.

"We have seen attempts in the past, even in Eastern Europe, where countries were gung-ho about effecting quick reforms, which ended up being disastrous to their economy and political setup.

"In our case, contrary to these aspirations by the opposition, what's most important is governance.

"What we have been successful is to check the abuse by leaders and cabinet members from squandering wealth through di-

rect negotiations, massive billions of dollars in tender. We have stopped that," he said.

On Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi's discharge not amounting to an acquittal (DNAA) verdict last year, Anwar said it was for the attorney-general to explain.

He also said it was up to the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) to proceed with any investigations if anyone was found to have amassed billions

while in power, regardless if they were part of the government or opposition.

"(Former prime minister) Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad supports the opposition and (former finance minister) Tun Daim Zainuddin seems to be quite neutral, but there has been an investigation by the MACC into billions that have allegedly been amassed.

"It is up to them to investigate, and for the A-G to charge if he

finds conclusive evidence for the judiciary to then adjudicate and decide. It's not for me.

"The problem is that I inherited a system which was authoritarian and semi-dictatorial, and it used to control the judiciary, prosecution and investigation when they assumed this position," he said.

Page 1 pic: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim at the Qatar Economic Forum in Doha on May 13.