

# Govt mulls legal action against Bloomberg

THE government is mulling legal action against international media outlet Bloomberg over its reports which claimed that the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) acted on instructions from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim regarding investigations into certain individuals.

Anwar said police had taken several steps, including summoning Bloomberg representatives and related individuals, on Oct 1, 8 and 11.

He said this was the second time Bloomberg had made “dangerous accusations”, with the first being its claim that discussions were ongoing about opening a casino in Johor.

“This is an extreme slander (on a matter) that the cabinet or the Yang di-Pertuan Agong has never raised.

“Legal action is being considered as the police have received reports and are investigating the matter.

“The investigation is ongoing. I leave it to the police to carry out their probe and the attorney-general to take action (if there is any misreporting),” he said during the Prime Minister’s Question Time in the Dewan Rakyat yesterday.

He was responding to a question from Ahmad Fadhli Shaari (Perikatan Nasional-Pasir Mas) on whether the government was prepared to take legal action against Bloomberg over the report.

Anwar said he only issued general directives to MACC, the Inland Revenue Board, police and enforcement agencies to act firmly against corruption without compromise.

“This was the directive given, but it does not involve specific cases because MACC, like the Attorney-General’s Chambers, must act independently and transparently, without fear or favour.

“Will there be any action (against Bloomberg)? That depends on the police report and if any clear wrongdoing is found, it is up to the A-G to prosecute.”

Anwar dismissed the notion that he would stop engaging with Bloomberg in the future, as he respected the principle of a free media.

“When the Tatar government invited me to Tatarstan several months ago, they asked that I become the keynote speaker at a conference organised by Bloomberg.

“We respect the principle of a free media. If there is slander, we will sue, or the police will take

***“The investigation is ongoing. I leave it to the police to carry out their probe and the attorney-general to take action (if there is any misreporting).*”**

specific action.

“But that does not mean we should prohibit or cancel all events with Bloomberg.

Last month, Bloomberg, citing sources, reported that MACC’s investigations into former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his sons, as well as former finance minister Tun Daim Zainuddin, were allegedly initiated by Anwar.

It also claimed that Anwar had allegedly instructed MACC not to investigate his former political secretary, Farhash Wafa Salvador Rizal Mubarak, over the purchase of shares in a company linked to the development of a billion-ringgit immigration system.

The Prime Minister’s Office refuted both reports while MACC Chief Commissioner Tan Sri Azam Baki said the commission did not take instructions from anyone, including the prime minister.

Anwar said it was unfair to link him to Farhash purely because the latter was his former aide.

He said if a tender did not go through the right process, it would be investigated fairly.

“I will not cover it up if there is a case. However, I do not want to prolong this issue because it involves matters that I consider trivial but to directly say (linking him to Farhash) because he was my employee four to five years ago is unfair,” he said.

Anwar said in Farhash’s case, the project tender was approved by the previous administration in 2022 before Farhash became part of the company.

He said anyone with information on the matter should report it to the MACC.

“This is not a political matter and I respect the question from Pasir Mas, I do not question it. I have also checked the files and it was indeed approved in 2022, before I became the prime minister and the finance minister.

“If he was involved, it would be through the normal tender process, and if there are violations, bring them forward and let MACC investigate the matter.”