

# 'Malaysia not a banana republic'

We can't take our foot off the anti-graft pedal or be complacent, says Anwar

By **MARTIN CARVALHO**  
and **HANISI TAN**  
newsdesk@thestar.com.my

**SEPANG:** Don't be complacent and compare the nation's fight against corruption to that of "banana republics" when there is still room for improvement, says Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The Prime Minister said the nation must not rest on its laurels in combating corruption or comparing its successes to "lesser" nations.

"There must be room for improvement, if not we will inherit a tradition and culture of

contentment and complacency.

"We need to accept the facts and be prepared to effect change and reforms to do better by making serious studies of the level of successes in other countries.

"We don't compare with the past. For example, the level of anti-corruption drives has been immensely successful but compared with what?

"Probably with some banana republic or do you compare it with the best?" he said when officiating at the launch of DHL Express' RM300mil Kuala Lumpur Gateway facility here yesterday.

("Banana republic" is generally

defined as a politically and economically unstable country that relies on the export of natural resources, for example, bananas.)

Anwar also said it is critical for the nation to possess a comprehensive business ecosystem to attract foreign investors, particularly in the logistics sector involving transportation, ports and aviation.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister said the smooth admission of Malaysia into BRICS as a partner country shows that the nation has once again regained its pride and is standing on the global stage.

"When we applied to join

BRICS, Malaysia was given the highest priority for acceptance as a partner country," he said, adding that he was informed of this by his Ethiopian counterpart Dr Abiy Ahmed Ah during the latter's two-day official visit to Malaysia last week.

"He (Abiy) told me that the first country to be nominated was Malaysia. (Russian President Vladimir) Putin proposed and accepted our nomination, which was supported by (Chinese President) Xi Jinping and endorsed by (Indian Prime Minister Narendra) Modi and other member countries.

"There was immediate applause

when Malaysia was named as a new partner country in BEICS," he said.

Apart from Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, Algeria, Belarus, Bolivia, Cuba, Kazakhstan, Nigeria, Turkiye, Uganda and Uzbekistan were recently accepted as BRICS partner nations too.

The successful nomination came at the BRICS Summit in Kazan, Russia, from Oct 22 to 24.