

## 'WE CANNOT OWE RAKYAT

# PM vows to settle govt debts, starting with tax refunds

**PUTRAJAYA:** Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim yesterday stressed that his administration "cannot owe the rakyat" as it moves to unwind billions in legacy liabilities accumulated over decades.

At the closing ceremony of the Rancangan Madani Bersama Malaysiaku programme and the 2025 National Convention on Public Service Reform here, the prime minister linked Friday's decision to expedite RM4 billion in tax refunds to this broader policy stance.

He said the Inland Revenue Board (IRB) had been instructed to speed up repayments for taxpayers who had overpaid, with the monthly allocation for refunds doubled from RM2 billion to RM4 billion to clear backlogs.

"The government does not want the rakyat to owe anything, and on principle, the government itself should owe the rakyat," he said, adding that the Finance Ministry and the IRB are devising more systematic mechanisms for prompt future refunds.

Anwar said the move was part of efforts to restore fairness in the tax system, pointing out that ordinary taxpayers often faced stricter enforcement than wealthy individuals or major corporations in the past.

He also stressed that many arrears were accumulated from previous administrations, citing tens of billions in unpaid obligations to companies and long-standing federal liabilities that "cannot be resolved in a single year".

"The national debt of RM1.3 to RM1.5 trillion did not happen overnight. We pay in stages, but we expedite where possible because this is a question of conscience."

He also announced adjustments to the e-invoicing threshold, raising it from RM500,000 to RM1 million for small businesses, after receiving feedback during recent visits.

"We listen, and we adjust. This is not about election cycles, but about addressing the rakyat's concerns."

Anwar said the government also accepted feedback and suggestions for improvements.