

# Nation on track to eradicate hardcore poverty

**PUTRAJAYA:** Malaysia is on track to completely eradicate hardcore poverty as the nation's hardcore poverty rate is now only 0.09%, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He added that the problem of poverty is expected to be resolved before the first quarter of next year.

Speaking at the Rancangan Madani event yesterday, Anwar said Malaysia's performance in reducing hardcore poverty places it among the best globally, surpassing even advanced economies in tackling extreme deprivation.

"Malaysia is now among the few countries in the world that have almost ended hardcore poverty.

"Even in the United States and Europe, the number of people living on the streets remains high.

"We should be grateful that our rate is now only 0.09%."

He directed ministries and implementation units to prioritise the remaining cases.

"I told officers that if 0.09% is all that's left, plan your work and complete it immediately."

He said programmes such as Kampung Angkat, Sekolah Angkat and Sejahtera Madani are designed to ensure that no community is left behind as Malaysia advances its economic transformation.

Malaysia posted a GDP growth rate of 5.2% in the third quarter, among the highest in the region.

Anwar cited a strengthening ringgit, rising investments and a 44% surge in trade, bringing cumulative trade value to RM2.235 trillion.

"This is Malaysia, a moderate nation of 34.5 million people recording impressive and encouraging growth."

He also announced that taxpayers awaiting refunds would begin receiving them on Monday, following the government's decision to allocate RM4 billion to clear accumulated tax-refund backlogs.

"Refunds have been held up for too long. The government does not want the people to owe the country, and the government also cannot owe the rakyat."

"This is a matter of fairness, *ihسان* (compassion) and morality."

He acknowledged complaints from small traders about e-invoicing which had placed a burden on micro and small enterprises.

He said the mandatory e-invoicing threshold has therefore been raised from RM500,000 to RM1 million in annual revenue.

"We made this decision because we listen, not because of political pressure."

Anwar criticised past practices where wealthy corporations could negotiate tax matters easily while smaller taxpayers faced strict enforcement.

"This must change. If someone owes the country, they must pay. But the same principle must apply to the government - debts owed to companies must be settled as quickly as possible."

He said the government continues to face legacy issues, including billions in outstanding payments to contractors and suppliers.

"These are inherited problems. We can only pay in stages but We handle them with political will and moral clarity."- *By Harith Kama!*