

# PM: Still much to be done

## Anwar praises Cabinet but stresses continued reforms

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**BANGI:** Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has expressed pride in his Cabinet ministers but stressed the need for continuous improvements, citing ongoing geopolitical tensions and rising living costs as key challenges.

Speaking at a Cabinet retreat, Anwar said the session aimed to evaluate ministerial performance, address public concerns, and make necessary policy adjustments.

"There are encouraging indicators that make me proud, but we must tackle certain challenges and make adjustments to our projections," he said during a press conference here yesterday.

He emphasised that Malaysia's economic policies must adapt to the complexities of global politics, including developments in the United States under President Donald Trump, responses from Europe, and the evolving situations in China, Gaza and Ukraine.

Anwar also reaffirmed the government's commitment to easing the financial burden on Malaysians despite positive economic indicators.

"While statistics show low inflation, we acknowledge public concerns over rising prices of essential goods. We must explore ways to raise wages, including revising civil servant salaries and the minimum wage system, while ensuring ministries take steps to reduce financial pressures on the people," he said.

When asked if the retreat addressed underperforming ministers, Anwar clarified that the session was designed not just for ministers to present their views but also to receive feedback from independent reports, academics, and civil servants.

"This retreat is not just a platform for ministers to share opinions - they must also listen to assessments from independent



**Addressing the media:** Anwar speaking at a press conference in Bangi. With him are (from left) Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, Fadillah and Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Shamsul Azri Abu Bakar.  
- Bernama

observers.

"I will not say everything is perfect, but overall, I am proud of their dedication. They take their responsibilities seriously, heed the feedback given and are taking the necessary steps to enhance their performance," he said.

The retreat also focused on maintaining Malaysia's balanced foreign policy stance - referred to as "Malaysia and Asean centrality" - to strengthen bilateral ties and expand trade opportunities, particularly in Africa and Latin America.

On another matter, Anwar dismissed claims that the government imposed conditions on the opposition in exchange for allocations, urging discussions to proceed without baseless accusations.

"They have accused us of forcing them to support the Prime Minister even before discussions began. But there were never any conditions imposed," he said.

When asked if he should personally negotiate with the opposition, Anwar reiterated that Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof had been given a full mandate to handle discussions.

"But for over two years, they have been evasive. We have no issue - we have given them space

and shown them due respect," he said.

Anwar added that while he is open to separate meetings with opposition MPs, the negotiations are being conducted based on a collective decision made by the Cabinet and all parties in the Madani government.

"There's no need for me to personally intervene when a full mandate has already been given. If they wish to meet me separately, that's fine. But in this context, the negotiations are being handled as agreed by the Cabinet," he said.

Anwar also pointed out that such government-opposition engagements had taken place in the past, including discussions between Pakatan Harapan representatives and the previous administration.

"At the final stage, I even met with then-prime minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob. These meetings were not one-off occurrences - there were about five or six discussions, and I personally met Ismail Sabri at least three times to resolve matters amicably," he said.

He also maintained that the government remains open to dialogue but urged all parties to engage in discussions without making premature allegations.

Separately, Anwar confirmed that he will meet Sarawak Premier Tan Sri Abang Johari Openg to further strengthen collaboration between PETRONAS and Sarawak's state-owned Petros.

He said that while the federal and Sarawak governments have agreed on the legal framework governing oil and gas operations in the state, the partnership between the two entities must be "solid" across all areas of cooperation.

"The agreement reached between myself, the federal government, Premier Abang Jo and the Sarawak government is to acknowledge all legal matters.

"But the most important aspect is ensuring that projects in Sarawak, particularly new ones, whether led by PETRONAS or Petros, involve close and solid cooperation between the two entities in all fields," he said.

Anwar said he will engage with the Sarawak government together with Fadillah, and if possible, arrange a meeting to hear their proposals.

Describing the current resolution as the best possible outcome, Anwar said this ensures that the interests of both federal and state governments remain aligned in Sarawak's energy sector.