

# PM: PRIORITY IS TO RECOVER FUNDS

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## Anwar blasts opposition for defending those accused of taking billions from country

FUAD NIZAM  
PUTRAJAYA  
fuadnizam@nst.com.my

**T**HE government's priority is to recover funds taken illegally, not punish those who have died, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said.

While not mentioning any names, Anwar criticised opposition leaders who defended individuals accused of amassing billions through dubious means.

The prime minister's comment comes after the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) announced it was moving to forfeit more than RM3 billion worth of assets linked to the late Tun Daim Zainuddin, his widow Toh Puan Na'imah Khalid, their family members and associates.

"We are not trying to punish the dead, we just want to recover the money that was taken illegally," the prime minister said.

"But some seem to think it's fine, no impact, and even use the parliamentary platform to defend those who siphoned off billions."

Anwar said there was a need to end the long-standing culture of extravagance and lack of ac-

countability.

"It has become ingrained in our system. That's why, if you look at the opposition now, there's hardly any talk about corruption.

"When I was in the opposition, corruption was priority No. 1. Now, when action is taken, some say, 'Have pity, he's old,' or 'He's no longer around,'" he said during the Finance Ministry monthly assembly here yesterday.

The prime minister questioned why there should be sympathy when the issue involved public funds.

"What kind of business was this? Nobody knows. How much wealth? RM4 billion? We don't know.

"He bought shares, but how much? And when he died, how much of the funds were left? RM2 billion? This is totally unacceptable," he said.

On another matter, Anwar shrugged off Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's insistence that he be

charged over the handling of the Batu Puteh dispute.

Anwar responded: "Let it be."

The prime minister had said the cabinet had decided not to pursue legal action against Dr Mahathir due to his advanced age.

He, however, added the government maintained that Dr Mahathir, 100, was at fault for halting efforts to reclaim the maritime feature in 2018.

Dr Mahathir responded by saying he rejected this "immunity" granted to him, and insisted that he be brought to court if any wrongdoing was found. Dr Mahathir accused also Anwar of having "found him guilty".

In December 2024, the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Batu Puteh, Middle Rocks and South Ledge, recommended that Dr Mahathir

be investigated.

The issue stems from the government's decision in 2018 to withdraw Malaysia's application to review the International Court of Justice's ruling on the sovereignty of Batu Puteh.

At the time, the government was led by Dr Mahathir.

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**DATUK SERI ANWAR IBRAHIM**