

PM: Need to uphold sound governance, fiscal discipline

> **Economic growth cannot come at expense of social equity and integrity amid transformation, says Anwar**

KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has emphasised the importance of strong governance, fiscal discipline and education as Malaysia continues to restructure its economy amid efforts to strengthen growth and reduce inequality.

Reflecting on the government's performance in its first year, Anwar who is also the finance minister said the administration had to confront deep-rooted fiscal challenges, including high national debt and systemic inefficiencies, while embarking on comprehensive policy reforms.

"We were struggling in the first year because we inherited huge debts.

"People have to understand that we need to embark on new policies and restructure the economy," he said in his keynote address at the Permodalan Nasional Bhd (PNB) Knowledge Forum 2025 here yesterday.

Anwar said that while Malaysia pushes forward with digital transformation and artificial intelligence (AI) adoption, the government remains committed to ensuring inclusivity and addressing structural disparities in education and connectivity.

"You talk about AI and digital, but we still need to educate the masses. Celik Madani is one of our initiatives to raise awareness on financial literacy, investment and savings. There is still a disconnect between



Anwar (left) and moderator Lorraine Hahn during a session titled 'In Conversation with Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim' at the Permodalan Nasional Bhd Knowledge Forum 2025 yesterday. - **BERNAMAPIC**

those with full access to connectivity and those in rural or urban poor areas. We cannot tolerate this imbalance," said the prime minister.

Anwar reiterated that real progress must be anchored in sound governance, truth, justice and compassion, noting that economic growth cannot come at the expense of social equity and integrity.

He noted recent fiscal enforcement successes, highlighting that the government had recovered RM15.5 billion through stricter action against corruption, smuggling and financial leakages.

"Due to effective enforcement by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission, the police and tax agencies, we were able to recover billions that were previously lost to leakages and racketeering.

"The real question is, how did we tolerate this for decades," he said.

Anwar reaffirmed that the government's next phase of economic reform would continue to prioritise governance, accountability and equitable development to ensure Malaysia's transformation remains sustainable and inclusive.

He reiterated that he will not interfere in commercial decisions to uphold market integrity, underscoring his administration's commitment to maintaining transparency and professionalism in Malaysia's corporate and economic landscape.

Business decisions should be driven by merit, efficiency and market realities rather than political influence, Anwar said.

"I do not interfere in commercial decisions, and none of my Cabinet colleagues should.

"Yes, we support new technology, green initiatives and welfare pro-

grammes, but we do not interfere in protecting personal or vested interests. The commercial decision is entirely yours."

Meanwhile, Anwar said the government has introduced several key policy measures to strengthen domestic investments, including initiatives such as the GEAR-uP programme, while realigning major institutions such as PNB and Khazanah Nasional Bhd with their core objectives to drive sustainable national growth.

He stressed the importance of staying true to their core aspirations and improving governance standards.

The prime minister added that while monitoring progress remains part of his responsibility, their hard work and strong commitment in implementing the reforms effectively have been commendable. - Bernama

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