



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, who is also finance minister, giving his address at a gathering of heads of departments and enforcement agencies related to financial crimes at the Finance Ministry in Putrajaya yesterday. BERNAMA PIC

ADDRESSING WEAKNESSES

'COMMIT TO REFORM OR STEP DOWN'

Decide in a week on readiness to take bold and firm action, PM tells senior enforcement officials

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P RIME Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has lost patience with senior enforcement officials, giving them an ultimatum of a week to state whether they are prepared to shoulder their responsibilities. He said if they could not do so, they should be ready to be moved to lower positions. He said officials unable to act firmly against wrongdoing should make way for others, following long-standing issues in enforcement. He said he had reached the point of losing patience and believed there were weaknesses and gaps that must be addressed to protect the country. "Weaknesses cannot be tolerated, whether in the form of en-

croachment, smuggling or other illicit activities that are taking place, sometimes enabled by circumstances or permission.

"If one has been entrusted with responsibility but feels unable to carry it out because the challenges are too great, the tests too severe or the distractions and temptations too strong, I suggest that within one week, this be communicated to superiors, myself, ministers or the chief secretary to the government.

"Inform us if you are not yet ready to take bold action and then make way for others," he said in his address to heads of departments and enforcement agencies related to financial crimes at the Finance Ministry here.

Present were Home Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail, Inspector-General of Police Datuk Seri Mohd Khalid Ismail, Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission Chief Commissioner Tan Sri Azam Baki and Attorney-General Tan Sri Mohd Dusuki Mokhtar.

Anwar, who is also finance minister, said the time had come for the top leadership of enforcement agencies to provide an answer on whether they were prepared to shoulder the responsibilities entrusted to them and carry them

out to the best of their abilities.

He emphasised that those present were not from a single unit, but represented all teams, so they must work together to reject complacency and uphold the values of truth, sincerity, compassion and justice to protect the people and the nation.

"Those who helm positions with stars (on their epaulettes) are not ordinary people. They have worked for decades and received longstanding recognition from various departments.

"But those stars must also drive us and compel us to do what is right and wise. I urge my colleagues to reflect on this moment immediately. My brief message is — it is time to act."

Anwar acknowledged the officials' many good deeds and major successes, saying their contributions could not be denied or disputed.

"But reality also forces us to reflect and think seriously. Do we want to carry on as usual? Smuggling okay? Corruption acceptable? Criminal syndicates tolerated? Various forms of smuggling we pretend not to see?

"I suggest we put this aside for now. What we must ask ourselves is, are we ready to undertake reform?"