

## **GOVT STANDS FIRM AGAINST ABUSE OF POWER, CORRUPTION – PM ANWAR**

**DATO' SERI ANWAR BIN IBRAHIM**

**NEWS**

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KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 11 (Bernama) — Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said that despite being viewed with cynicism, the Unity Government remains firm in its stance against abuse of power and corrupt practices.

Citing the government's decision to stop the practice of hiring foreign workers using agents as an example, the Prime Minister said despite objections from a few stakeholders, measures to ensure that the workers involved are not abused will still continue.

He said the high cost imposed by agents affects the entry of foreign workers, when the country needs them in certain sectors, such as plantations and the food industry, including restaurants.

“We know that there are parties making high profits by imposing excessive additional costs, and by right, we should be seen as putting efforts to defend workers' rights and prevent any form of oppression, whether they are local workers or foreign workers.

“We don't want this to continue. That's why I am firm in this matter and if there are cynics, I don't care...my friends and I in the Cabinet are determined to elevate the country to become a great nation,” he said.

He said this when launching the Housewives' Social Security Scheme (SKSSR) and the 2023 MYFutureJobs Career Carnival here today, which was also attended by Human Resources Minister V. Sivakumar.

Anwar said that he was aware that there were a few 'wealthy people' protesting the decision with various threats, but the firm decision taken by the government showed a positive sign in the aspect of hiring foreign workers.

The Prime Minister said that without illegal money payments and oppressive corrupt practices, the government's comprehensive measures saw almost 200,000 foreign workers enter and register as workers in the country.

"This came about after we set foreign workers to be registered without going through an agent, and decided the cost for each of them would be only RM3,700 covering medical costs and other documentation matters," he said.

In this regard, Anwar urged industry players, companies and employers to jointly play an important role in stopping any element of corruption in the operation of their respective companies, in order to achieve the aspirations of a clean and corruption-free Malaysia.

On Wednesday, Anwar was reported to have said that the government wants the Home Ministry (KDN) to stop using agents for the recruitment of foreign workers, due to the high costs involved.

He added that, for example, the cost for a worker from Nepal is only RM3,700, but for those from Bangladesh and Indonesia, each worker involves a cost between RM20,000 and RM25,000, due to the high fees charged by agents, and described it as 'modern slavery'.

In the meantime, Anwar said that he had instructed the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) to take immediate steps to find ways to simplify business application matters, for companies interested in starting a business in this country.

The Minister of Finance also said that business application matters should be carried out more quickly and efficiently, following the increasingly positive interest shown by entrepreneurs and investors regarding business in Malaysia.

“I want the business registration process to be expedited, and MITI needs to introduce a faster and easier method for industry players.

“I am very confident that if this effort can be emphasised and expedited, we can see a new Malaysia, a Malaysia Madani in the true sense, within this year,” he said.

Regarding the introduction of SKSSR, Anwar said that the scheme, which was introduced on Dec 1, last year, was a government effort, through the Social Security Organisation (Socso), in recognising the important role played by housewives.

The Prime Minister said as a pillar of the family, the role of the housewife needs to be recognised and given due respect by the government, including by husbands making contributions for their wives.

According to Socso, until Jan 31 this year, 141,144 housewives have contributed under the scheme, of which 135,281 are registered housewives with e-Kasih and contribute with EPF i-Suri whose contributions are

sponsored by the government for a year through an allocation announced in the Budget 2022.

With only a RM120 total contribution for a period of 12 months, paid 'in-advance', housewives will enjoy several benefits, including permanent disability benefits, survivor's pension and funeral benefits.

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