

'PM walking the talk in fighting graft'

By Kalbana Perimbanayagam - January 16, 2023 @ 6:32pm

KUALA LUMPUR: Civil servants who may have been afraid to report any abuse of power or corruption in their midst must come forward to report such matters now.

Abuse of power and corruption have long tainted the civil service and have gone unreported, for various reasons, said former anti-corruption advisory board member Datuk Seri Akhbar Satar.

He said this lackadaisical attitude was expected to change under the leadership of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim who is said to be "going all out" to fight corruption.

Anwar, in his speech at Perdana Putra today, said civil servants must be brave to report any abuse of power and graft in their midst without any hesitation.

Speaking to the New Straits Times, Akhbar said he was overwhelmed with the commitment and seriousness of the PM, who is "walking his talk" in fighting graft.

He said Anwar's speech this morning while addressing civil servants, was evidence that the new government was all for clean and corruption-free governance.

"Anwar is the first PM who has made fighting corruption one of his top three priorities, after addressing the rising cost of living and stabilising the economy.

"It's obvious that he is giving the needed emphasis to clean up the system. Changes can't be done individually, so civil servants must also play their role in reporting any malpractices, or wrongdoings by those in government, without fear or hesitation," he said.

Akhbar said Anwar's strong will and call today was a good start to involve civil servants in bringing about the must needed change.

"This will certainly give motivation to government staff to report any graft or abuse of power to the relevant agencies.

"The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission which will be investigating such reports must also be allowed to work independently, without any political interference, either from him or those associated with the present government.

"So far, he (Anwar) is doing a great job and hopefully it will remain that way, regardless of who the accused is," he said.

Akhbar said government servants are among those who are directly exposed to such activities and with Anwar's call today, he believes it will encourage more civil servants to come out and report any abuse or corruption they may know.

"Civil servants cannot prevent politicians from interfering, however they can report the matter to the authorities. Times have changed... they will also be protected by the Whistleblowers Act," he added.

Akhbar also reminded civil servants that those who know of wrongful practices and do not report them can be charged under Section 25 of the MACC Act.

"The world is watching us and any kind of leniency or special treatment for any individual subjected to MACC's investigations may bring down perceptions of Anwar's integrity.

"While encouraging his staff, Anwar too must allow MACC to stay independent and not interfere in any investigation. Let the law take its course," he said.