

**ETP not the way to transform economy: Anwar
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Anwar Ibrahim, who had ruffled feathers amongst the ruling party this week over his comments to the Australian media during his visit to Canberra, delivered a lecture at the Australian National University, Canberra on Monday 15 Nov, on the topic 'Social Justice and Political Change: the Malaysian Experience'.

pkrtaman ehsan selayang ceramah 020810 anwarThe de facto opposition leader spoke of democracy and justice saying, "...you can't be calling for social justice without expecting political change," illustrating his lecture with the Malaysian experience of the present BN government, in particular heavily criticising Prime Minister Najib Razak's Economic Transformation Programme.

Reproduced below is an extract from Anwar's prepared lecture:

"...Political change is therefore a condition precedent to attaining social justice if it is shown that a society is heading down the road to greater social perdition under its present government. There must be political will to change its socio-economic policies.

"In this regard, the Economic Transformation Program that was recently unveiled by the Najib administration bears analysis. The numbers are impressive, if not altogether mind-boggling. All told, we are looking at more than RM1 trillion in so-called expansionary development and projects calculated at transforming a middle income economy to a high-income economy.

"On closer analysis, however, we are unable to connect the dots to see that critical mass in poverty reduction programs that would be needed to narrow the current gap between the rich and the poor. To seriously address the growing GINI coefficient, general and vague expressions of targeting for higher per capita income simply won't do.

"We don't see concrete plans to address the housing problems of the poor and a blue print for universal free education. We don't see any comprehensive health care for those who can't afford private medication and hospitals.

NONE" What we see is a frenzied conviction to outdo the megalomaniacal visions of the Mahathir era. We see grandiose designs, humongous structures, buildings taller than the KLCC Twin Towers and other mega projects that are destined to make crony companies outperform others in the share market and the rich and powerful, richer and more powerful.

"On balance, we see monumental wastage at the expense of the people and the environment. We see the future of our children and the generations to come being sacrificed on the altar of greed and the illegitimate amassing of wealth.

"The rent-seeking culture will continue with the manner in which multi-million ringgit contracts are doled out. The issues of governance, transparency and accountability are not addressed even as the indices on transparency and corruption continue to drive investors away.

"Transforming an economy cannot be done through mere theory – the litmus test is implementation. The condition precedent to passing this test is to put an end to the culture

of corruption, rent-seeking, and power abuse.

'Support economically marginalised'

"Now, at this juncture one may well accuse me of being a socialist advocating a welfare state. The answer to that is simple: I make no apology for calling for a more equitable distribution of wealth in as much as I make no apology for maintaining that the safeguarding of fundamental liberties is also one of the main ends of political and social justice.

etp road map book" These liberties are of paramount importance but as Amartya Sen has argued, other considerations including that of economic needs are just as vital.

"To my mind, he has posed a stunningly simple but compelling question: "Why should the status of intense economic needs, which can be matters of life and death, be lower than that of personal liberties?"

"In my humble view, some basic formulations for the attainment of social justice may be advanced. Governments must be committed to the principle that a more equitable distribution of income is a fundamental precept for the realisation of social justice.

"It is on this platform that I urge my government to undertake integrated plans for poverty reduction in the long run while ensuring a comprehensive support system for the poor and economically marginalised.

"Economic power must be checked by the principles of governance and accountability. Are we supposed to sit idly by as politicians in public office continue to renege on their promises of social justice while scandalizing the institutions of power with abuse and corrupt practices?

'Reject politics of hate'

"Finally, the discourse on social justice and political change in the context of Malaysia must also be seen in the light of our multi-cultural make up where communal tensions run the risk of being exploited by "sectarian demagoguery".

namewee photo burnt by perkasa members 2" We must therefore reject ideological rigidity and the politics of hate and exclusiveness in all its forms. Politics of this kind engenders divisive barriers whether they are founded on ethnicity, language or religion.

"When communal violence erupts and innocent lives are lost, a nation is jolted into the realisation that peace and harmony among the people is always a transient phenomenon. One day, it's there and the next day, it may just come tumbling down under the weight of sectarian strife, or religious conflict or class wars arising from social inequities and economic deprivation.

"It is often only after the fact, when events of a cataclysmic nature unfold, that the policy makers and social pundits get jolted to the reality that freedom could be meaningless without food on the table or that the rule of law may still discriminate on grounds of caste, wealth and status.

"This is the caveat, the mental construct we should bear in mind when we talk about social justice and political change in Malaysia. It is a stark reminder that peace in our time must

be more important than just material progress. In a multi-cultural society like Malaysia's it is therefore incumbent on leaders to shoulder the responsibility as protectors of this fragility.

NONE "In this regard we must condemn in the strongest terms the racist chanting of modern day demagogues. Playing to the gallery is well and good if all we're looking for is just a good round of applause. But when you have at your disposal the organs of state power and the entire state controlled electronic and print media, the propagation of supremacist doctrines backed by the threat of violence is not only immoral and utterly irresponsible but blatantly criminal.

"At the very least, we would expect such leaders to urge for inclusiveness and greater understanding and respect among the communities and not to stoke the fire of racial discord.

"To paraphrase Macbeth, they should against the murderer shut the door, not bear the knife themselves."

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