

Anwar: Focus on economy instead

Address matters concerning rakyat, not racial and religious rhetoric

Ready to go: Anwar launching the Bangsa Malaysia seminar in Bangi. Looking on are (from left) Ahmad Azman Ab Rahman, Mohd Raimi Ab Rahim and Prof Datuk Dr Mohammad Redzuan Othman.



By SIRA HABIBU
sira@thestar.com.my

BANGI: The narrative for a New Malaysia should hinge on economic fundamentals, and not racial and religious rhetoric, says Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The PKR president said the focus should be on the economy to address inequality and uphold justice for all.

"Various studies indicate that Malaysia has been facing an economic slowdown over the last 15 years.

"Therefore, it is pertinent to focus on the economy to address inequality, and to uphold justice for all, the focus should be on matters that are of concern to the rakyat," he said at a seminar on Bangsa Malaysia on Saturday organised by Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia and National Union of Malaysian Muslim Students.

Anwar - who was part of the Barisan Nasional government for 15 years before he was sacked in 1998 - claimed that the nation was ruined because of a lack of ethics in administration during the previous government's 60-year reign.

"We can talk about religion and Malay civilisation, but we cannot succeed as a nation in the absence of ethics and morality," he said.

The Port Dickson MP also took a swipe at Malay leaders who had failed to be firm in asserting the use of the Malay language at

official functions.

He said it was not right to blame other races over their weakness in mastering the national language when the Malay leaders had failed to assert the use of the official language enshrined in the Federal Constitution.

Anwar also dismissed as "irrelevant" the Opposition support for Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad to serve a full term, saying that leadership transition matters should be decided by the Pakatan Harapan presidential council.

"The Opposition wants to create a problem, that's normal," he said, adding that he was not surprised when PAS and some Umno leaders expressed support for Dr Mahathir to remain as Prime Minister for a full term.

On another matter, Anwar disagreed with public policy analyst Dr Lim Teck Ghee's claim that Pakatan posed an unmitigated disaster to the nation.

"When bribery was rampant, people stealing by the barrels, he kept quiet.

"Now he wants to say the situation is uncontrolled. I disagree," he said.

Lim was quoted as saying during a "Whither Malaysia Dignity 2.0" forum that disappointment against the government had become more widespread.

Watch the video
thestartv.com