

Indians show unity for Anwar

Community asked to vote in state elections for political stability and change

By **RAGANANTHINI VETHASALAM**
raga@thestar.com.my

PETALING JAYA: In a show of Indian unity in the country, dozens of political parties, civil society groups and captains of industry are set to gather today to rally behind Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's government.

They also want to send a message out to the Indian community to come out and vote in the state polls.

Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Amirudin Shari is expected to attend the event organised by the Selangor Indian Consultative

Council (SICC) at the Midlands Convention Centre in Shah Alam at 3pm today.

"The meeting is to bring together all stakeholders of the Indian community, (including) political parties, professional organisations and cultural groups," said SICC chairman Charles Santiago.

However, Santiago acknowledged that many in the community feel that their contributions are sometimes denied and there is insufficient support for them. He said the meeting would be an avenue to show their unity in seeking solutions.

"The meeting is also to get the vote from the Indian community.

Right now, there is a bit of a wavering (support) for Pakatan Harapan and Barisan Nasional," he said.

"Now is not the time to deny the vote. Now is the time to come out. Whatever suspicion you have, you have to come out and have faith in the government," he said.

"With this Prime Minister, we can have dialogues. He understands the problems of the community and has pledged that he will work with community leaders in order to solve them," he added.

Santiago said MIC has also agreed to participate, adding that its problems with Umno had nothing to do with the initiative.

"The internal problem between MIC and Umno is a separate problem," he said.

The hour-long event will see leaders stating their support for Anwar's unity government, with participants from several states.

SP Nathan, coordinator of i25, an umbrella body of 22 Indian-based NGOs, said his group would also attend the event. He urged the Prime Minister's Office to consider an action plan for Indians.

"It can be from the National Action Plan for Indians called the Madani Empowerment Plan for Indians (MEP4I) (developed by SICC in 2022) or from any plan that other Indian groups have

sent. But we need a plan," he said.

Nathan added that a stable government was needed for a prime minister to execute such a plan.

"The Opposition says if they can win the state elections, they can push for change in Putrajaya. i25 is aware that the Federal Government will remain intact no matter what but there will be political instability. Such instability will divert the attention of the Federal Government and they may not focus on the minorities," he said.

He felt that an opposition success in the elections would lead to instability until 2027.

"The Indians will lose another four years," he said.