



Huat Ah! Anwar with his wife Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail (third from right), Penang Governor Tun Ahmad Fuzi Abdul Razak (centre) and Chow (left) as they toss yee sang with others during the Penang Chief Minister's Chinese New Year open house at Spice Arena in Bayan Baru, Penang. - ZHAFARAN NASIB/The Star

Go far by rejecting graft'

PM: Malaysia can hit the heights if it rebuffs corruption

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GEORGETOWN: Malaysia has the potential to achieve great heights and become a developed country if it rejects corruption, says Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The Prime Minister said this included the perception that cash handouts given during elections were not a form of corruption.

"If it is for charity, then that is fine. But if the charity is to obtain votes in elections, that is corruption," he said when addressing the crowd at Penang Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow's Chinese New Year open house at the Setia Spice Arena in Bayan Lepas yesterday.

While the Prime Minister made no reference to anyone in particular, PAS has come under fire over the issue of cash handouts.

Its president Tan Sri Abdul Hadi Awang was quoted as saying that cash handouts given to voters in three Terengganu parliament constituencies in the general election last November were "from the public" and not by the party, insisting that there was nothing wrong with such an act and no electoral

laws had been broken.

Terengganu Umno has filed petitions to nullify the results of the 15th General Election for the Kuala Terengganu, Marang and Kemaman constituencies, alleging that PAS had bought votes using i-Siswa, i-Belia and i-Pencen.

Anwar said he was confident in the country's ability to develop and become one of the best in the region but there was a need to stop corruption on many levels.

"No more stealing the country's wealth. High-ranking civil servants and enforcement bodies should no longer be allowed to use their power in acquiring wealth that does not belong to them through government contracts," he added.

Anwar said Malaysians needed to be brave enough to reject discrimination, racial issues and corruption.

"I believe if we succeed in rejecting all these, we will achieve what we have never before (greater heights).

"We must have humanity when living in a society together. There is no use if there is no respect and love between all of us," he said.

"There is no use in development if we do

not have an understanding between all of us."

Anwar said his emphasis would be on promoting local hawkers and eateries rather than just the main attractions in Kuala Lumpur.

"One of the firsts on my list as Prime Minister is to make Kuala Lumpur known for its variety of eateries and food, and to make sure they are good and clean so people will have business, for it is not just about our monuments.

"We can use Penang as an example of the emphasis given to local hawkers and eateries. Their cleanliness and quality have been looked into by the state," he said.

Chow, in his speech, said the state government would support the new vision and policy formulated by Anwar.

He said the event was not just to celebrate Chinese New Year but to celebrate the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

"We are now in a phase that allows us to go back to living life as before, celebrating better economic conditions that have shown positive changes. We want to celebrate the involvement and participation of the community in the recovery process," he added.