

# Unite for a common goal

## PM: Indian leaders must have a firm stand together

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**SHAH ALAM:** In order to resolve issues faced by the Indian community in the country, leaders from the group must have a firm united stand, says Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The Prime Minister said this call was not new, as it had been echoed to the Indian community and political leaders in the past.

"I have told this to Vicky (MIC president Tan Sri SA Vigneswaran) and even Ramanan (Sungai Buloh MP Datuk R. Ramanan) repeatedly that if you want resolve the issues plaguing the community, the first step is that Indian leaders must be united towards a common goal.

"Even though we may have different political ideologies and policies or even different strong opinions, we cannot set aside the fact that only with a determined political will, the frameworks we have chosen will be easy to implement," he said in his speech at the Shah Alam Convention Centre yesterday.

Anwar attended the Educational Development and Future of Indians programme, organised by Malaysian Indian Transformation Unit (Mitra), which is his first meeting with the Indian community since becoming Prime Minister.

Also present were Education Minister Fadhlina Sidek, Deputy Education Minister Lim Hui Ying, Ramanan, MIC deputy president Datuk M. Saravanan, Dewan Negara Senator Datuk Dr Nelson Renganathan and National Water Services Commission (SPAN) chairman Charles Anthony Santiago.

Anwar went on to say those who know him are aware that he does not compromise in his fight for all the races in the country after being given the mandate to lead this nation.

Citing poverty as an example, he said it did not see colour or the shade of a person's skin, as such he asked the Indian communi-



**Big honour:** Vigneswaran (left) and Ramanan presenting a large garland to Anwar during the event at the Shah Alam Convention Centre. - RAJA FAISAL HISHAN/The Star

ty leaders for their support and endorsement on most of the policies.

"There is a paradigm shift in policy adjustment, and I need you to give your full support to most of the policies with the exception of some to cater for the concerns of Malay, Chinese, Indians, Kadazan, Iban and Dayaks.

"But overall policies are not going to be race-based but it is going to be need-based. Poverty is poverty.

"If I am talking about ending hardcore poverty, if there are those hardcore poor in the city, estate, rural and regional areas, I want this problem resolved this year," he said.

"The majority of poor people are among the Malays but in the category of the poorest based on race it is the Indians," he said, adding that he is determined to end poverty regardless of the race by the

end of the year.

"Poverty is not an Indian agenda or a Malay agenda but agenda of rakyat Malaysia."

However, Anwar reminded the people about the biggest challenge brought up by the Opposition on racial sentiment that Malays had lost their power or the poor Malays had been neglected because he was more focused on the well-being of the Chinese and Indians.

He said this was an old narrative and slander made against him because the allocations for the Malays had not been reduced, including the bigger amount given to Sekolah Kebangsaan.

Echoing the same sentiment, Vigneswaran calls on the Indians to move away from the old fashioned way of thinking in order for the community to have a brighter future.