

THAHTHI TV INTERVIEW

ANWAR LAMBASTS DR M OVER DISLOYALTY JIBE

He wants to divert attention from govt's effort to eradicate corruption, says PM

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THE unity government has condemned Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's recent statement, where he questioned the loyalty of the Malaysian Indian and Chinese communities to the country. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said Dr Mahathir's remarks in an interview with a Chennai-based Indian satellite television channel were irresponsible for a political figure who had twice served as the country's prime minister. He said he believed that Dr Mahathir made the remarks to divert people's attention from the present administration's ongoing ef-

forts to eradicate corruption.

"His statement is irrelevant. It is irresponsible for Dr Mahathir to make such a remark, especially coming from a former prime minister who served the country for quite a long time," he said after launching the "AI Untuk Rakyat" programme here yesterday.

Anwar said it was not acceptable for the former prime minister to humiliate anyone, regardless of whether they represented the majority or the minority of the country's population.

"He is known to issue such statements... such as calling the Malays lazy, questioning the loyalty of Malaysian Indians and Chinese, unless they are his cronies.

"Perhaps this is an attempt to divert people's attention from the government's efforts to eradicate corruption and uphold good governance in the country."

Anwar also called on Malaysians to strengthen unity and respect each other.

"Let us work together and work towards a common goal."

Earlier in his speech at the

event, Anwar urged the people, especially the younger generation, to reject leaders with outdated views that could harm the country.

"There are former leaders who are trying to conceal their wrongdoings by insulting the people, calling Malays lazy and even claiming that the Chinese and Indian communities are not loyal to the country.

"This is *lapuk* (old-fashioned) thinking that will only harm the country.

"I hope the people, especially the younger generation, do not entertain leaders with this kind of thinking. Let us focus on elevating the dignity of the nation."

In an interview with Thanthi TV recently, Dr Mahathir said he believed that Malaysian Indians and Chinese were not completely loyal to the country as they still wanted to identify themselves with their countries of origin.

"There are people who consider themselves (as) Indians or Chinese. They do not speak the local language at all," he said.