

# Anwar upset over petty bickering

## There are more important issues that need to be addressed, says PM

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**PUTRAJAYA:** As Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim is making efforts to bring in investments for Malaysia from abroad, he says he is disappointed to find people caught up with bak kut teh and school canteen issues upon returning home.

"Malaysia needs strong economic growth instead of never-ending bickering.

"While I was talking about investments (abroad), I came back to Malaysia to the bak kut teh and (the opening of) school canteens during Ramadan issues.

"Those are the hot topics being discussed, as if they concern our entire existence and dignity. I hope this won't be the case anymore because we can do better," said Anwar, who was on a work visit to Germany from March 10-15.

The Prime Minister said he is upset that some people, including MPs, are playing up sensitive issues during the fasting month.

He added that togetherness and



**Looking at growth:** Anwar with Ahmad Zahid (left) during the Prime Minister's Department's monthly assembly with civil servants in Putrajaya. - Bernama

mutual respect are part of the spirit of Ramadan, while calling on allparties to end such polemics.

The Prime Minister expressed hope that Malaysians would engage in discussions that would benefit the country.

"Digital transformation, renew-

able energy ... these are among the important things for our country to talk about instead.

"I hope Allah will give us all the strength to focus on what's important so we can uplift the country's dignity once again.

"If we are firm in our princi-

ples, we can do and achieve everything we desire," he said in his speech at the monthly assembly of the Prime Minister's Department here yesterday.

Also present were Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Mohd Zuki Ali.

Anwar said the act of worship encompasses all aspects, not just praying.

"What's the point of fasting if we still take commissions and bribes or are being wasteful?

"In my meeting with the King yesterday (Sunday), His Majesty said 'let's break fast with water and one date' because he said we waste too much (food).

"This reminds us that we should be mindful of our spending and use the extra money on those who need help," he added.

On another issue, Anwar said he had never viewed Hamas, the Palestinian military movement, as a terrorist group.

He said Malaysia would stick to its principles of upholding independence, justice and freedom, as

the country, back when it was known as Malaya, had fought against the British for its liberation.

He said the move of some international media, which bombarded him with tough questions and accused him of sympathising with Hamas, would not deter him from speaking out about the current genocide in Gaza.

"German reporters, in a harsh manner, asked why I recognised and befriended Hamas, but my answer is simple: Did the Palestine-Israel conflict begin on Oct 7 (2023)?

"No, it started in 1948 when a large number of Palestinians were expelled and killed.

"Since then, we have witnessed the same genocidal news every year.

"Only the colonisers view freedom fighters as terrorists.

"To us, the Mat Kilau (Malay warriors) were not terrorists," he added.

Anwar said he, along with Ahmad Zahid, will continue to enjoy good relations with the Hamas political body.