

## RACE, RELIGION AND ROYALTY

# PM: Govt can take criticism, but no compromise on 3Rs

**PUTRAJAYA:** Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said he and the government were willing to accept any criticism, but would not compromise with any party that touched on the three R's — race, religion and royalty.

He said the freedom of speech provided for in the Constitution did not mean the freedom to criticise and insult at will.

“The Malay rulers, through a consensus, asked the government to be more strict in curbing this as they feel it is unjust. They are attacked and yet they cannot respond.

“Everyone talks about upholding Malay rights, even the parties are Malay parties, yet they insult the Malay rulers.

“I will not compromise with

those who break this law.

“The police will be strict and I will ask the attorney-general to study the issue and bring them to court.”

He said this during the *Soal Jawab Perdana Menteri* programme with four television stations that aired on Wednesday.

He said the government would not tolerate anybody who went after the royal institution, citing as an example reports about the alleged involvement of royals in the setting up of a casino.

On Wednesday, in his speech at the national Labour Day celebration in Putrajaya, Anwar said anyone who linked him and the government to supposed discussions on introducing a casino licence for Forest City, Johor, should face

the full brunt of the law

Describing those behind the allegations as politically bankrupt, Anwar said His Majesty Sultan Ibrahim, King of Malaysia had never expressed to him any wish to set up a casino in Forest City.

Anwar also said the government would continue to monitor the rate and impact of inflation following the announcement of a pay hike of over 13 per cent for civil servants starting December.

He said the government would monitor the implementation of the pay raise and the cost.

“That is why the increase (in inflation) will be phased in December and will continue into the following year.

“So if it (inflation) goes up, it will be under control because, as

we know, inflation in our country is among the lowest in Asia.”

He said the government would strive to ensure the inflation rate did not burden the people.

Anwar announced the salary increase for civil servants during the national Labour Day celebration. It will involve an allocation of more than RM10 billion.

According to Bank Negara Malaysia, overall inflation is expected to remain moderate at 2.0 to 3.5 per cent this year, as cost pressures remain under control due to improved global supply conditions.

Anwar denied that the cost of living was the highest in the country's history.

“That is a lie. I used to oversee price controls for goods many

decades ago as finance minister. We used to assume that every year before Hari Raya, the price of chicken will go up, but this time it did not.

“We also monitor the prices of vegetables and fish. Some go up, I am not denying it, but we are monitoring.”

He said the cost of living in Malaysia was still well-controlled compared with Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines.

The almost hour-long interview with the prime minister was conducted by RTM presenter Sayed Munawar Sayed Mustar, Bernama TV's Pasha Abdul Rahim, Awani's Muhammad Zulfitri Yusof and TV3's Azaria Tagaya. **Bernama**