

Material success hollow without rapport, says Anwar

by **ZAKIAH KOYA**
zakiah@thestar.com.my

PETALING JAYA: An open and sincere dialogue is crucial for fostering understanding and mutual respect among Malaysia's diverse communities, according to Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

During his keynote speech at the 30th International Conference on Civilisational Dialogue here, the Prime Minister said a person did not choose to be born of a certain race.

"I did not choose to be Malay - I was born Malay. You did not choose to be Chinese.

"This is why we must recognise the differences among each other and get to know each other.

"Of course, there are the rotten and nasty among us, but the good ones represent conscience and values.

"Should Malaysia focus on economic development? Is economic development fundamental to the growth and success of Malaysia?

"What is the meaning of suc-

cess in development and progress when people become dogmatic, inhumane, condone oppression, abuse power or get involved in corruption?

"Where are the voices of reason?" he said during the event at Universiti Malaya yesterday, which was attended by local and international guests.

Also present were Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Zambry Kadir, International Islamic University Malaysia Rector Prof Emeritus Datuk Dr

Osman Bakar and Prof Daniel A. Bell from Hong Kong University.

Anwar criticised politicians who incite hatred among the races, labelling them destroyers of the fabric of Malaysian society.

"Universities must promote what is right and what can guarantee our peace and security.

"I may not win votes by promoting dialogue, but this is the right thing to do. And because justice and human dignity are of paramount importance for a multiethnic country like ours, dia-

logue is the key to our survival.

"Malaysia is in a unique position to showcase that we can survive as a community," he added.

Anwar said there are some MPs who have "zero understanding of respect" for others and that they need to be given a talk by experts on an open dialogue on fostering mutual respect.

"We cannot fail. I am committed to this dialogue.

"Good governance and respect transcend race and that is what the dialogue is all about," he said.