

PM: Justice is for all Malaysians

Balance needed in approach to ensure all get assistance, says Anwar

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PUTRAJAYA: Justice must be upheld for all Malaysians, regardless of whether they are from the majority or minority ethnic groups, says Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The Prime Minister said it is crucial that his administration take an approach which strikes a balance to ensure justice not just for the Malay majority but also for others such as the Chinese, Indians and indigenous groups.

"We do not want a tyranny of the majority, but at the same time, we do not want a tyranny of the minority. The approach we take must be one of justice.

"If there are any weaknesses, we will make improvements, such as in the coming Budget where adjustments will be made," he said at the Finance Ministry's monthly assembly

Anwar said weaknesses may arise despite the government's best efforts, which is why dialogue is needed to rectify any shortcomings.

He acknowledged that talk on justice will surface from time to time in Malaysia's multicultural society but chided certain groups,

particularly the opposition, for pitting the races against each other.

Anwar also explained the rationale behind the government's approach in disbursing aid and assistance to the various ethnic communities, which varied according to their needs.

He said that the government distributes allocations fairly to all segments of society through a transparent approach, without marginalising any ethnic group.

He cited an example where up to 75%, or about RM14bil under the government's Business Financing Guarantee Scheme was channelled to Chinese businesses, particularly the SMEs.

"It is not a matter of preferen-

tial treatment towards Chinese businesses; rather, it is a coincidence that a significant proportion of SMEs are owned by Chinese companies.

"If people ask me why I'm focusing on the Indian community, then I will say that although their numbers are small, we must not be like certain countries where the minorities are pushed aside. We do not want that," he said.

For the bumiputra, the Bumiputera Economic Transformation Plan 2035 (PuTERA35) is a more meaningful and targeted programme for the community, aimed at developing the group's socio-economy in the long term and ensuring their participation, he added.

"I want to clarify this so that there will be no misunderstanding and questions about why we choose the Malays only, why only the Indians and only the Chinese, or only those from Sabah or Sarawak," he said.

The Prime Minister also chided the opposition for claiming that Malay rights had been surrendered to other races, particularly in light of the recent appointment of Comm Datuk M. Kumar as the head of Bukit Aman's criminal investigation department.

"The department is made up of about 90% Malays, but its head is an Indian.

"This is not an issue for me. Anyone who is capable of the job is eligible for it," he said.