

Anwar: Divisive politics will weaken the nation

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KOTA KINABALU: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has warned leaders not to exploit race, religion or regionalism in their campaigns ahead of the Sabah state election, saying that divisive politics will only weaken the country.

"There is nothing wrong with defending your race and religion, but do not hate others. If you use racial or seditious sentiments, out you go.

"Yes, we need to fight, but don't fight friends," he said at a meet-the-people session in Kionsom, Inanam, yesterday.

Anwar, however, said the problem lies not with the state but with its leaders.

He took aim at certain Sabah

leaders, saying many had held powerful federal positions but failed to prioritise the people.

The Prime Minister said that when they were in power, some enriched themselves and their families.

"But when they lose power, they start pointing fingers. What is the difference? You should do your best for the people while in power, not only after retiring.

"So I ask you this: what did you do when you were in power?" he said.

On corruption, Anwar reiterated his zero-tolerance stance, stressing that the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission must be allowed to act independently, including in Sabah, where several high-profile cases have surfaced this year.

Anwar said he could forgive those who insult him, but not



Warm greeting: Anwar arriving at a meet-the-people session in Kionsom, Inanam. — Bernama

those who steal from the people.

"I have no power to forgive. I want to get back the money and give it back to the people. That is not my money. You steal, you give

back," he said.

Anwar stressed that those found guilty of misappropriating public funds, regardless of their title or position, must face justice.

"It doesn't matter whether you are a Tan Sri or a Datuk Seri. If found guilty, you must be punished and jailed," he said.

Anwar also rejected claims that his anti-graft drive was driven by personal vendetta.

"Some people say I am vengeful. What vengeance? We need to take care of this country," he said, adding that he had no role in investigations.

"If I interfere, then I would be a dictator."

Turning to development, the Prime Minister hinted at "something special" for Sabah in Budget 2026 and announced fast-tracked projects, including RM39mil for urgent school repairs and flood mitigation along the Inanam River.

He added that phases of the Pan Borneo Highway were progressing, with funding already in place.