

**Vote Pakatan for a better economy, says Anwar**  
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**By Shazwan Mustafa Kamal**

KUALA LUMPUR, June 22 — Corruption, cronyism and financial mismanagement will reign supreme should Barisan Nasional (BN) remain in control of Putrajaya, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim warned last night, saying Pakatan Rakyat (PR) has the ideas to manage the country's economy.

The PR de facto leader told a 2,000-strong crowd in Setapak here that if Malaysians were to still vote BN in the future, they would not get to enjoy the fruits of their labour.

This, said Anwar (picture), was because government projects would still be awarded to "sons of ministers" and cronies while taxpayers' earnings would only be used to fund the ruling coalition's war chest and to keep their supporters happy.

"The sons of ministers get contracts all the time. If you are hardworking it's your own prerogative, but if you take government money then how can you defend yourself," the PR leader said to cheers from the audience.

Proof of BN's hypocrisy, said Anwar, was how it was willing to enrich its cronies but unwilling to implement policies to ease the burdens of ordinary Malaysians.

"Every time Parliament convenes they want to add allocation of RM15 billion, subsidies for sugar, additional funding for independent power producers (IPPs)," said Anwar, adding that the current economic conditions under BN only allowed select individuals to monopolise all major industries.

"When we talk about setting minimum wage at RM1,100, (Prime Minister Datuk Seri) Najib (Razak) says the country will go bankrupt. When we say cancel the National Higher Education Corporation (PTPTN) loan, they say the country will go bankrupt.

"But we (PR) can afford to do it, we can cancel PTPTN, this is because we know how to manage money responsibly," Anwar added.

Putrajaya's latest move to spend RM8 billion more for subsidies has led the opposition to accuse the BN government of using public funds to benefit cronies instead of the public.

Anwar pointed out while debating the Supplementary Supply Bill earlier this week that the sum was nearly 40 per cent more than the original allocation in Budget 2012, specifically pointing to the increase in sugar and toll subsidies as "ensuring the profitability of crony companies."

"I am certain in this case, the profit to the crony companies is excessive," the opposition leader said of the RM343 million added to the initial RM446 million to subsidise tolls.

He also said that as Tan Sri Syed Mokhtar al-Bukhary's Tradewinds is one of two companies that control the local sugar market, the RM367 million added to the RM198 million allocated under Budget 2012 was not proportional to the actual increase in sugar prices.

"We want to know who actually benefits from these subsidies. They say it's for the public.

Show us what are the profits of these companies,” the Permatang Pauh MP said.

The opposition has previously questioned if the government was handing over the RM198 million allocated for sugar subsidies under Budget 2012 to politically-connected companies after nearly tripling sugar subsidies despite a dive in global prices over the second half of 2011.

PR has also repeatedly accused the BN government of signing lopsided toll concessions and channelling subsidised gas and coal to IPPs who have long-term electricity supply contracts with Tenaga Nasional.

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