

08 MAR 1996

Anwar-Social

SEVENTH MALAYSIA PLAN WILL GIVE PRIORITY TO SOCIAL AGENDA AS WELL

KUALA TERENGGANU, March 8 (Bernama) -- The Seventh Malaysia Plan (1996-2000) will give high priority to the social agenda besides the economy, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said today.

It would be the first Malaysia Plan that not only placed fundamental emphasis on economic issues but also adequate attention to the social agenda of the country, he added.

This included the importance to promote a greater awareness of religion and the family institution as the foundation to ward off the ever serious social problems besetting society," he told a Hari Raya Aidilfitri gathering here, organised by the state government.

"The previous Malaysia Plans all gave priority to the economic field... the other areas were only given passing attention," he said

Anwar said the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad would give further clarification on the plan at its launching in Parliament House in April.

He said Malaysia's future and its direction would be assured if it adopted an attitude of moderation, humility, readiness to learn and willingness to correct mistakes because problems reminded, including those of a social nature.

"Its dadah problem, for instance, now involves 200,000 addicts, 70 percent of them Malays... other social problems also involve Malay youth," he added.

Anwar stressed that the solution would only come through social awareness and religious education as the foundation of a strengthened family institution.

Officials and other institutions could not help in solving the majority of problems if the family institution as a foundation was not preserved, he said.

The government was taking proactive steps by learning from the existing weaknesses and embarking on bold measures to remedy the problems, he added.

Anwar, also the Finance Minister, said the government wanted to make the Zakat Institution in Malaysia one that was effective in collecting and managing tithes.

The Zakat institution was a highly critical and strategic one which need to be expanded, he added.

For that purpose, the government had sought the guidance of a renowned Islamic scholar Dr Yusuf Al-Qardhawi.

Dr Yusof, who will be in the country from March 19 till the end of the month, would be giving advice at a conference on the Islamic financial system and securities industry organised by the Securities Commission apart from meeting with kadis and muftis.

Today's gathering was attended by about 1,000 community and Barisan Nasional leaders from the state. -- BERNAMA

SBJ LDB