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Anwar-Immigrants

STRATEGIES BEING DEvised TO TACKLE REFUGEE PROBLEM IN SABAH

KOTA KINABALU, Sept 22 (Bernama) -- The National Security Council (NSC) meeting in the middle of next month will come up with effective strategies to handle the illegal immigrant problem in Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said today.

He said the meeting had to be held as the number of illegal immigrants in Sabah had exceeded 500,000.

It would be chaired by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and would also be attended by Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Yong Teck Lee.

"It's a normal meeting but one of the items in the agenda is the problem of illegal immigrants whose number had swelled in various areas of Sabah and this problem will have to be attended to," said Anwar who is Chairman of the Cabinet Committee on Foreign Workers.

The meeting would also discuss the question of foreign workers in the whole country, he said.

"We will have to adopt a more effective strategy involving the security authorities," he said after opening the fifth congress of the Liberal Democratic Party here today.

Asked how serious was the problem in Sabah, he said: "well, if it exceeds half a million, then it is serious already."

Anwar said the government had to tackle the illegal immigrant problem due to rising complaints from the local people.

The illegal immigrant problem would be handled taking into account their breach of rules, crimes involving such people and their utilization of normal public facilities.

"We have to deal with it and hopefully we can resolve this through government to government arrangement with our neighbours," he said.

Anwar said the NSC meeting differed from the functions of the Cabinet Committee on Foreign Workers as the NSC was involved more on security issues while the committee deals with workers and matters relating to Immigration. -- BERNAMA

HAK ES AAM