

18/08/1997

Anwar: Have rational approach to syariah laws

LANGKAWI, Sun. - Umno deputy president Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said a "rational approach" was important when dealing with implementation of syariah laws.

He said one should not make hasty decisions as this could lead to misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the issues involved.

Opening the three-day Kedah Umno convention tonight, Anwar said by studying the issues carefully, this did not mean that one was going against the syariah laws.

Referring to the recent confusion regarding Umno's stand on Islam and syariah laws, the Deputy Prime Minister stressed that Umno's stand on syariah laws was clear - it had never questioned the laws.

"What is being questioned is the interpretation on the implementation of the syariah laws and what the best way is of implementing the laws," he said.

In this context, Anwar said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad must be given the opportunity to express his views on the best ways of approaching the issues.

"This is not a political question which can just disappear like that but it is a policy matter," he added.

Dr Mahathir had recently touched on the way certain syariah laws were implemented by certain States.

Anwar said he understood Dr Mahathir's views on the matter through discussions with him.

"What Dr Mahathir wants is for Malaysia to be a model Islamic nation with political stability and economic development complemented by spiritual and moral values," he said.

Anwar said there were various approaches towards understanding the syariah issues.

He said there was a need to clearly understand the objectives of the syariah laws pertaining to their implementation.

"The thrust of the laws is that there must be justice for all," he added.

Earlier, in his address, Menteri Besar Tan Sri Sanusi Junid offered Kedah to be an experimental State for religious programmes.

One of the programmes being undertaken by the State was having pupils to revise their studies in mosques. Sanusi said so far 100 mosques in Kedah had participated in the programme.

About 1,200 party leaders attended the convention which will end on Tuesday.

(END)