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Anwar: Carry out Islamic laws wisely, objectively

KUANTAN, Sat. - The implementation of Islamic laws must be carried out wisely and according to Syariah objectives which place security of the country as top priority, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said today.

He said the paramount duty of an Islamic State was to first provide security and then implement good and strong economic strategies through political prowess.

Towards this, he said it was important for Muslims to understand clearly that Syariah was not just confined to enforcement of Islamic laws.

He said many world Islamic scholars felt an Islamic country must first ensure security and economic prosperity before getting into details of implementing Islamic principles on the people.

"Security must always be given priority to prevent chaos, which can result in political strain," he said when opening the Seventh Pahang Umno Convention, attended by 3,000 delegates and observers.

Also present were Anwar's wife Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, Menteri Besar Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob and party leaders, including vice-president Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, secretary-general Datuk Sabbaruddin Chik, Wanita chief Datuk Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman, Deputy Menteri Besar Datuk Hasan Arifin and State liaison secretary Datuk Abdul Rashid Abdul Rahman.

Anwar said only when security was guaranteed could the Government strengthen the economy which, in turn, paved the way for other efforts like poverty eradication and upgrading of education, health and housing.

He said all these were required in Islam.

"Are we (the Government) not responsible for the security of the country? Are we not responsible for the economy, education standard and turning Malaysia into a model state?" he asked.

Anwar, who is Umno deputy president, criticised those who said that Umno leaders should refrain from talking about Islam because they were not well-versed in it.

"Are these people competent in the security and economic aspects?" he asked.

Anwar said the most important function of Syariah was to strengthen the faith of Muslims.

He said the implementation of Islamic laws should not be done hastily as it could threaten the peace and stability of the country.

"The strength of Umno over the years comes from the party's moderate stand in all aspects and not by using force and acting hastily," he said, adding that Umno was not against Syariah Law.

"We have demonstrated our commitment with the establishment of Syariah-related departments and agencies and these were done through political and economic strength," he said.

He said the spirit of goodwill, co-operation, tolerance and respect for each other in the multi-racial population must be continuously promoted and protected.

He said he had discussed this matter with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad who had expressed concern that it might confuse the society.

Later, speaking to reporters, Anwar said the proposal on the implementation of uniform Syariah Laws by all States would be raised by Dr

Mahathir at the next Council of Rulers meeting.

At the function, Anwar also launched a book on 50 Years' History of Pahang Umno and a photography exhibition on State Umno. Among others, the exhibition features 40 historical moments of Umno's struggle in the State captured on film by New Straits Times photographers.

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