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Anwar-Poverty

APPARENT POVERTY CAN BE ERADICATED BY 2000, SAYS ANWAR

SHAH ALAM, July 28 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said today the government is confident that apparent poverty in the country will be eradicated by the year 2000.

The Deputy Prime Minister said the confidence is based on the latest data and the success achieved so far.

"We can't accept that despite economic growth in the country there are still people who are neglected and not taken care of," he said during a pre-Budget dialouge session at Kelab Shah Alam.

Anwar said poverty eradication as the country's main social agenda will be emphasised in the 1998 Budget which is scheduled to be presented in October.

The budget will also give priority to the democratisation of education in urban, rural and interior areas, and on providing health facilities as well as basis amenities in the rural areas.

Anwar criticised the practice of some implementing agencies to expand themselves to the extent that it affects their concentration on their role and duties.

"It is more meaningful if the facility reaches the targetted group without there being major expenditure on expanding the agencies," he said.

The Deputy Prime Minister said priority will also be given to the development of the family institution in the wake of the increasing social ills.

For instance, he said 1,000 cases of child abuse were reported last year compared to 511 in 1990, while baby dumping cases rose to 55 last year from 36 in 1989.

Anwar also said different standards should not be applied when implementing law and order.

"Adults in high position and youths as well as the low income group should not be subjected to differing laws. Laws should be clear and have the same objective," he said.

He described as appropriate Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's advise on the need to exercise moderation and prudence when implenting the law.

Steps which shock the people and cause the younger generation to become suspicious should not be taken, he said.

"I know this is a sensitive matter in Selangor and that's why I chose to speak about it in Selangor," he said.

Among the moves by the state government that have attracted much debate include the ban on concerts by pop star Michael Jackson and the local rap group KRU, and the recent arrest and prosecution of three Muslim girls for participating in a beauty contest.

Anwar said the crime rate among youths is alarming, with a 66 per cent increase in the number of theft, drug abuse and sexual offence cases from 2,480 in 1980 to 4,125 in 1995.

He said sometimes the approach taken in dealing with problems affecting the youth does not solve the problems.

The dialouge session was also attended by Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Abu Hassan Omar, Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Dr Affifuddin Omar, Treasury parliamentary secretary Datuk Dr Shafie Salleh, as well as leaders of associations and non-governmental organisations.

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