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Anwar-Economy

REAL ECONOMIC STRENGTH RESTS ON JUST DISTRIBUTION

MARANG, Terengganu, May 30 (Bernama) -- Acting Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said today the government's policy of ensuring just and fair distribution of wealth represented the nation's real strength arising from its economic growth.

He also said the government always took into account just distribution from the aspect of development so that the gap between the rich urban areas and the poor kampung sector did not widen.

"The basis of Malaysia's economic strength is that the government does not go for development in only one particular area such as the west coast of the peninsula and marginalise other areas," the acting Prime Minister said when launching the Marang New Growth Centre at Undang here.

The Government always went for justice and balance in its various development efforts.

"We ensure there are schools in Kuala Lumpur as well as Marang and there are also secondary schools in Pasir Puteh not to mention Ceruk Teok Kun and Permatang Pauh," he said.

The acting Prime Minister said the government ensured just and balanced growth in all parts of the country so that the wellbeing of rural societies would be guaranteed.

"How can economic growth be retained if there is no political stability and how can the political system be stable if the economic system does not give comfort to all the people," he said.

Anwar said the government felt that if big industries could not be brought to the kampung areas, medium and small scale industries would also do in such areas.

Anwar, who is also Finance Minister, said the latest figures showed that the basic strength of the national economy would continue.

He said the manufacturing sector registered a 12.9 per cent growth in the first quarter of this year while inflation was at three per cent compared to 3.4 per cent over the corresponding period last year.

Malaysia's balance of trade which showed a deficit of more than RM1 billion in the first quarter of last year turned into a surplus of RM2 billion in the first quarter of this year.

The Acting Prime Minister said Malaysia's international reserves also increased from RM65 billion last year to RM71 billion this year.

He said the high rate of growth at more than eight per cent now entered the 10th consecutive year.

He noted that developed countries including France and Germany were facing big unemployment problems.

"In Malaysia we have the basis and commitment to implement programmes, make evaluations from time to time and ensure that the political and administrative machinery cooperated in handling the problem of poverty," the acting Prime Minister said.

Anwar said efforts must be made speedily to build on the success that had been achieved so that Malaysia would become a model to other Islamic countries.

Anwar also said Malaysia should also be a rich nation in the industrial and information technology fields if it wished to continue progressing.

He said the Multimedia Super Corridor initiated by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamed would become the centre for the expansion of information technology for the whole country and hence Malaysians should

understand and develop their knowledge in this field.

He said Malaysians particularly Muslims should come up with their own programmes and software if they did not want this technology to be taxing on them with the emergence of new damaging ideas.

The acting Prime Minister accompanied by his wife Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Ismail is on a one-day visit to Terengganu.

He later witnessed the signing of an agreement between the state government and Malaysian Industrial Estate Sdn Bhd for the development of small and medium scale industries on a 200-hectare site here.

Terengganu Menteri Besar Tan Sri Wan Mokhtar Ahmad was also present. --
BERNAMA

SBJ AAM