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Anwar: Resilience of people will help overcome problems

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim today expressed confidence in the resilience of Malaysians in overcoming economic problems.

Describing the current situation as "the most difficult in our post-Independence history", he said he has trust and belief in the resilience of Malaysians.

"If we give them the right understanding, discipline and resolve, we can overcome (the problems). Some say it is not possible.

"But this country was once downtrodden and completely marginalised in the international economic environment, yet in a matter of five years to one decade, we moved up the ladder and very fast.

"There is no reason why we cannot do this again," he said when opening the Muslim Leaders' Forum organised by the International Islamic University at the Putra World Trade Centre.

About 200 Muslim community leaders, professionals and scholars from all over the world are attending the forum.

Anwar said the Malaysian community has to remain united as these difficult times require genuine efforts and resilience.

Saying that there were those who merely harped about struggle and those who were actually committed to it, Anwar reminded the people that the road ahead would be full of challenges.

"Once committed, we must accept that it is a daunting task. If anyone imagines it will be easy, they will be frustrated," he said.

Anwar also said international arrangements have to be adjusted as they now favoured the rich economies while marginalising the poor.

He said just as full disclosure and transparency were demanded of developing countries, the same should be equally required of international institutions like hedge funds and currency traders.

Noting that the economic crisis has been blamed on the fundamentals of the countries of the region, Anwar said fundamentals alone could not bring about such destruction.

On claims of corruption and excesses, he said even if these were the sins of a few leaders, the whole society should not be condemned to abject poverty.

Speaking of difficulties facing Muslims worldwide including civil strife and conflict, Anwar said there was a need for greater understanding.

Towards this end, he said universities should inculcate the love of scholarship for itself rather than the acquisition of knowledge merely as a rite of passage towards graduation.

While education had to be relevant to present-day demands, it should also inculcate an understanding of values.

Asked later about the "shocking" measures to revive the economy referred to by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Saturday, Anwar would only say:

"We will announce later the measures on the economy. We are discussing them."

Dr Mahathir, when addressing the people of Sabah on Saturday, had said the people should be prepared to accept further measures which might be "shocking" to overcome the economic problems.

He had said the measures were strictly aimed at expediting the recovery process.

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