

16/08/1998

Anwar: Team work, support vital for economic recovery

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said today to lift Malaysia out of the present economic difficulties, everyone has to work as a team, support Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and speak in one voice.

Anwar said political stability took precedence over everything.

He added that political stability along with sound ethnic relations and resilience of the people were the country's plus points for economic recovery.

"Thus, we have to maintain political stability and ensure that it is strengthened," he said at the 'Fourth National Address' organised by the United Kingdom Executive Council for Malaysian Students, whose members are from 42 universities in the UK, at the International Youth Centre in Cheras.

Anwar, who is also Finance Minister, said recovery efforts would bear fruit if there was unity, and attempts to pit one leader against the other and to mar ethnic relations were brushed aside.

"We may not be able to return to previous levels in a short period of time, but we will begin to recover and to have confidence."

He recounted to the students events leading to the ringgit depreciation and the economic downturn, and the role of the currency traders and how the country had to manage its own affairs.

"We can get assistance or support from others, by all means we will accept ... but we can't get things done by relying on others."

With Japan and Korea reeling from economic woes, the only sources of assistance would be from the West which Anwar said were not likely to make this the top priority.

Anwar also spoke of the continuing efforts to bring development to the rural areas and in assisting the poor.

In a dialogue later, the Deputy Prime Minister was asked about the latest situation concerning Singapore and whether there was a conspiracy to bring down the country's economy, when would the economy recover and money politics.

On money politics, he said the battle was against corruption, abuse of power and giving bribes to buy votes.

Anwar said Umno's initiatives in curbing its spread through stern actions like expulsion and disciplinary action had borne results.

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