

# Anwar determined to eradicate poverty

> Prime minister earnest in efforts to improve conditions for poor and prioritise education for children

**JOHOR BAHRU:** The role of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim in helping to develop Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia (AIM) shows his commitment in eradicating poverty.

His wife Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail said AIM currently has more than 300,000 women participants nationwide, thereby helping many in the group to escape the shackles of poverty and succeed as entrepreneurs.

"I have been part of AIM from the beginning, when Anwar began his efforts. I know his struggle in trying to eradicate poverty and ensure that children's education comes first.

"Even now that he is the prime minister, efforts to put an end to poverty is still his main focus," she said in her speech at a Rewang Merdeka AIM Wilayah Johor event in Kampung Pasir yesterday.

Wan Azizah also thanked the management of AIM for successfully directing and managing the institution without straying

"I see that there are improvements and practical programmes have been organised for the benefit of AIM friends."

The Bandar Tun Razak MP urged AIM participants to take advantage of the free tuition programme, that was launched recently for their children.

Anwar was one of the first individuals to aid AIM aid through the Tabung Ikhtiar initiative in helping to set women free from poverty, and has approved an immediate allocation of RM500 million for the first phase of the infrastructure development project at the Sultanah Aminah Hospital here.

He said the project included the construction of a multi-storey car park as well as several new high-rise blocks, adding that the multi-storey car park will be built soon, with the construction process to begin this year.

"For the first phase, we need RM500 million and after discussing it with the Finance Ministry, we want this project to be expedited and the project amounting to half a

billion ringgit has been approved," he said after a visit to the hospital yesterday.

Also present were Health Minister Dr Zaliha Mustafa, Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Onn Hafiz Ghazi, Health Director-General Datuk Dr Muhammad Radzi Abu Hassan and hospital director Dr Sal Atan, Bernama reported.

Anwar said the hospital has an area of about 100 acres that was sufficient to build a car park and develop several more high-rise complexes that would be able to cope with hospital services and resolve the issue of patient congestion.

"From what I witnessed earlier, the situation has become dire. The (hospital) beds are being placed right in the middle of the wards.

"This situation has been left unresolved for a long time without any action taken. It is now time for me and the health minister to resolve it. We will take immediate action and the allocation has been approved."

On whether the construction of another hospital had been discussed, he said the project was being further planned.

He said the second hospital would be part of the 12th Malaysia Plan mid-term review, adding that the situation at the current hospital must be dealt with first.



Anwar speaking at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia in Skudai during his visit to Johor yesterday. - BERNAMAPIC