

Plug 'leaks' that hinder aid

PM wants schemes for the poor managed transparently, ethically

TANJONG MALIM: The government's focus on governance is to ensure that assistance for the poor reaches them, says the Prime Minister.

Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said although various agencies have been set up to implement poverty eradication programmes, there were still "leaks" that prevented aid from reaching the target groups.

He said there were the Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority (Fama), Fisheries Development Authority (LKIM), Farmers' Organisation Authority (FOA) and other bodies such as Risda, Felcra and Felda to help out.

"But are these agencies (being) managed and their programmes implemented transparently and responsibly?"

"Some are, some are not," he said in his speech at the 100 Years of Za'ba Poverty Thinker Seminar at Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI) here yesterday, Bernama reported.

Anwar said the government spent RM22bil a year on poverty eradication efforts, and if managed effectively, this could resolve the issue in the country.

He said poverty must be tackled through efforts that involved multiple dimensions, adding that it should not be solely focused on the implementation of projects or programmes.

Rather, it must also consider various aspects, such as the causes of poverty, capital ownership and distortions within the marketing system, such as exploitation by middlemen - all of which needed to be addressed, he said.

"For example, if fish is sold in Pantai Remis at RM2, by the time it reaches Ipoh, the price becomes RM6, and when it arrives in Kuala



Up close with the PM: Students from Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris posing with Anwar (left) during the event. - Bernama

Lumpur, it goes up to RM12.

"This distortion does not help poor fishermen. We can implement projects to assist the poor in Pantai Remis, but if we do not correct the exploitation by middlemen, it creates imbalances, low productivity and low capital.

"This is the problem that we are focusing on," he added.

Anwar said the issue of poverty from various dimensions had been discussed and advocated by scholars and academics, including the late Tan Sri Zainal Abidin Ahmad (Za'ba), that intellectuals serve as references for

building a new resolve to eradicate poverty.

"We should use this opportunity to set a new determination, to know that throughout the history of any nation and its people, there will be moments when we have the chance to decide whether to make a shift towards improvement or just remain stagnant," he said.

The premier said poverty eradication was not limited to financial resources and material possession, but that it also encompassed intellect, wisdom and aspirations.

At the event, Anwar also launched the National Teacher Campaign and National Academia Day 2024.

The late Za'ba was posthumously awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award for National Academia, which was accepted by his granddaughter, Dr Sharzede Salleh Askor.

Also present were Perak Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Saarani Mohamad, Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Dr Zarnbry Abdul Kadir, and Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Chang Lih Kang.