

Anwar: We're trying to help

Don't challenge move to uplift poor urban Malays, Opposition told

Helping hand: Anwar (centre) accompanied by Zahid (second from left), Majlis Amanah Rakyat (Mara) chairman Datuk Dr Asyraf Wajdi Dusuki (left), Deputy Rural and Regional Development Minister Datuk Rubiah Wang (second from right) and Mara deputy director general Datuk Zulfikri Osman at the launch of Wakaf Mara Madani. — RAJA FAISAL HISHAN/The Star



By RAHIMY RAHIM
rahimyr@thestar.com.my

KUALA LUMPUR: The Opposition has been warned not to challenge the government's move to uplift and protect the interest of the Malay and bumiputra communities, says Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The Prime Minister said the government's efforts in drafting the proposed Urban Renewal Act was aimed at improving the well-being of the urban poor, many of them from the Malay community.

Yet, there are some who are opposing it and planning protests.

"I want to tell them, don't challenge us. We are fighting for the poor, the majority of whom are Malays, along with a segment of Indians and some Chinese.

"Yet, you seek to disrupt these efforts. If you want to hold a rally, we can gather at a stadium to

defend the policy to help the Malays," he said in his speech at the launch of Wakaf Mara Madani in conjunction with the 59th Mara Day celebration here yesterday.

Anwar chided those who oppose the proposed law on redevelopment and want to block progress for the urban poor.

"And those who oppose it are Malays, Islamist parties.

"What have they ever proposed to help the Malays? Nothing.

"What have they proposed to help the urban poor Malays? Nothing.

"So I suggest if anyone wants to give criticism, go ahead. If you want to offer suggestions, please share them. But do not undermine our efforts," he added.

Anwar said the Urban Renewal Bill will not alter the status of the land involved, including strata ownership.

"This is part of our commitment in the government, to create

development and progress, and to reach better outcomes," he said.

Last month, PAS Youth said it planned to hold a protest rally against the Bill, claiming that it will displace "minorities".

During yesterday's event, Anwar launched Wakaf Mara Madani, which is aimed to help the Malay community.

He kicked off the campaign, whereby he and Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi will pledge to donate RM1,000 each to the fund.

Anwar said the wakaf (endowment) initiative is part of the Islamic heritage at building strength from the grassroots.

He added that it would provide Malays and bumiputra with opportunities to develop and take charge of their own future.

"This does not mean that we will reduce government allocation.

"This is the pledge made by

Zahid and me. We will not reduce it.

"Both of us agreed to donate RM1,000 each to Wakaf Mara Madani," he said.

Wakaf is a Muslim voluntary charitable contribution made to support people and organisations in need.

Anwar urged those who attended the event to donate to the initiative.

According to a statement from Mara, the main objective of the establishment of Wakaf Mara Madani is to improve the socio-economic well-being of the bumiputra through sustainable wakaf instruments.