

Rich getting richer while poor getting poorer in Malaysia, says Anwar
Malaysian Insider
October 01, 2012
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KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 1 — Malaysia faces a widening gap between wages and the profits of companies under the government's Economic Transformation Programme (ETP), Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim warned today.

He told Parliament when debating the government's Budget 2013 proposals that not enough was being done by the Barisan Nasional (BN) government to narrow the gap between the rich and the poor in Malaysia.

The opposition leader claimed household wages remain low and that structured analyses show the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer.

"This means the economic growth and all the projects announced by BN do not bring effect on the incomes of a majority of the people," Anwar (picture) said.

He added surveys showed 44.2 per cent of Malaysian households make less than RM2,500 a month, and share only 14 per cent of the country's economic prosperity in stark contrast to the 50 per cent shared by the top 20 per cent of wealthiest Malaysians.

"The excitement in chasing economic forecast numbers without specific policy reforms to narrow the gap (between the rich and the poor) and ensure even distribution is more evident than ever in the prime minister's ETP," Anwar said.

"The analyses and comparisons in economic value made by the ETP projects and wages given to workers show that by 2020 workers will be paid much less in relation to company profit.

"If now, the ratio of wages to profits stands at 28 per cent, under the ETP it is expected to fall to 21 per cent," he added.

Earlier, Anwar had said the national economic plan should shift from only meeting equity targets and growth to ensuring a minimum household income of RM4,000 a month by the end of a first-term Pakatan Rakyat (PR) administration.

He also said economic growth should be generated by small and medium-sized businesses and not just by "one or two big bosses."

Speaking in Parliament, the opposition leader pitched his PR's Budget 2013 proposal to focus on disposal income instead of chasing equity and growth targets.

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