

**Govt Committed To Develop Indian Community - Zahid
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BAGAN DATOH, Oct 22 (Bernama) -- The government is committed to eradicating poverty among the Indian community apart from the issue of education drop-outs especially in secondary schools, said

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

He said the government was constantly planning ways towards ensuring that members of the community would not be drawn into gangsterism.

"In previous discussions, we have said that we want the Indian community in this country to have jobs and avoid gangsterism.

"There is no race that wants to be gangsters. For as long as I am Home Minister, I will work hard to combat gangsterism because we want this country to be peaceful," he said.

He said this when launching the Ethirkalam 'Victory for the Future' programme held at the Dewan Sanmarka Orang India, Hutan Melintang here Saturday.

The Deputy Prime Minister said the government together with leaders of the Indian community and non-governmental organisations had various plans to ensure the continuity of the social status and welfare of the Indian community in this this country.

Ahmad Zahid also called on political parties and NGOs which represent the Indian community to unite so that their people's welfare continued to be looked after.

"Set aside the differences in politics, religion, culture, race, regardless of whether it is Telegu, Tamil, Malayalam or Punjabi, and unite.

"We are on Malaysian soil, ancestry is important, but what is more important is that we are Malaysians who are loyal to the land that we live in," he said.

The Deputy Prime Minister said the Indian community was very fortunate as their welfare was always a priority of the government, including in the 2017 Budget tabled by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak yesterday.

In the budget, the government announced a RM50 million allocation for National-Type Tamil Schools (SJKT), he said.

"In fact, the Prime Minister gave a bigger allocation for micro-credit loans, and I hope Indians with the talent to become entrepreneurs use this to improve themselves and their families," he said.

At the event, Ahmad Zahid also announced a RM100,000 contribution to the Sri Murugan Centre to

conduct activities at SJKT Barathi and SJKT Tun Sambathan for two years beginning this year.

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