

Monday, 18 December 2017

Zahid: We have failed in our war on drugs



Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said today the government had failed in their war on drugs, as the number of users and addicts have continuously increased in recent years. — Bernama pic

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 17 — Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said today the government had failed in their war on drugs, as the number of users and addicts have continuously increased in recent years.

In his opening speech at the Malaysian Drug Prevention Association (Pemadam) 42nd Annual General Assembly, the deputy prime minister said 58 per cent of convicts in jail were there for drug-related crimes, while the number of addicts have increased by 14 per cent, last year.

He said the number of addicts in 2016 was 30,847, while in 2015 the number stood at 26,668.

As for new addicts, the number had increased from 20,281 to 22,295 in the same time span.

“We have to admit that our efforts had failed but it does not mean we have to stop at it.

“We should not have the in denial syndrome and must admit our failure,” he said.

Zahid said the approach in combating drug abuse needs to be more holistic, as authorities need to outsmart drug pushers and manufacturers.

“Those who were involved in the drugs syndicate have outsmarted us and this is why we failed. Now we have to be smarter than them.

“We have only been seeing the smaller picture, instead of looking at things at a wider perspective,” he said.

To encourage Pemadam and other anti-drug agencies and NGOs in continuing their cause, Zahid announced an annual allocation of RM10 million starting next year, for the groups to carry out drug eradication programmes.

“I want to see this funds to be fully utilised, as I do not want to see taxpayers’ money go to waste.

“If I do not see a decrease of 50 per cent (in drug cases) by December 31 next year, then I will retract the allocation,” said Zahid at the Dewan Merdeka, at the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC).

Meanwhile, in addressing the United Nations’s efforts to decriminalise drugs for personal use, Zahid said that there will be no compromise on the Malaysian government’s part even if there is a resolution by international agencies to legalise the use of dangerous drugs.

“As long as drug addiction is not 100 per cent eradicated, social problems and crimes stem from drug use would continue.

“We will not abide by any efforts to legalise the usage of drugs as legalising it is beyond the modern thinking of human norms,” he said.

In June, the UN and World Health Organisation (WHO) issued a joint statement calling for a review and repeal of punitive laws including those that criminalised drug use or possession of drugs for personal use.