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Develop love for scholarship, urges Anwar

KUCHING, Mon. - Quoting Confucius and hadith in underscoring the importance of knowledge and disseminating truth, acting Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim today urged teachers and students to love "scholarship".

"And I don't mean getting a biasiswa (scholarship)," he quipped when launching the Sekolah Menengah Bantuan Agama Majlis Islam Sarawak in Petrajaya, 25km from here.

"What I mean is the scholarly pursuit of knowledge."

Anwar, who is also Finance Minister, said the love for scholarship did not mean just reading and memorising but also inculcating a love for knowledge, from primary school to university till one became a professional.

Sprinkling quotes from Confucius, Anwar said one of the great lessons from this concept was the respect and tolerance for one another, especially between different races and religions.

"It is better for us to know, understand and appreciate one another rather than simply tolerating one another. Of course, hating and not tolerating one another is much worse."

Speaking to teachers and students of the Islamic school, Anwar said in the pursuit of knowledge, one should not always complain about the difficulties in getting facilities.

The school, he said, was one of the best in the country, if not the best in the world, in terms of facilities and aesthetic values.

Such aesthetic values should inspire the pursuit of knowledge and serious creativity and innovation, he said.

"If you still have to complain, then it must be because you lack reference books, computers or a laboratory," he said. "If that is the case, I will increase the allocation for this school."

However, in keeping up with Confucius' principle of reciprocity, Anwar said the principal of the school would be directed to submit examination results to justify the demand for better facilities.

Anwar said the days of complaining about lack of educational facilities were over.

Referring to the quick succession of statements on Vision 20220 made by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, he said Malaysia had to keep up with a new tempo of development or it would forever be left behind.

"We have jumped from an industrialised state to information technology state in a very short period because we have no choice.

"We cannot defend our long-term development in industrialisation if we upgrade ourselves based on the old tempo."

Stressing the importance of learning about computers and utilising them effectively, Anwar told a story of how in the post-war years, rural folk bought refrigerators just because their urban cousins bought one.

"The urban cousins used it normally but in the rural areas, because there was no electricity, they used them to hang their clothes!"

"So, if you must have computers, learn how to use them effectively or don't have them at all."

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