

# Islamic curriculum 'adds value'

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**SHAH ALAM:** With the success of the Jawi, Quran, Arabic and Fardhu Ain (JQaf) curriculum, the government can quash criticism that the education system is un-Islamic.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the curriculum added value to the education system.

"I used to wonder why people said that our educational system was not Islamic.

"After giving much thought, I realised the knowledge that we imparted to students might be good and appropriate and required by the religion.

"But the education system did not require the students to read the entire Quran. That's why it

was proposed that the Education Ministry introduce Quran reading as a subject requiring pupils to read the Quran properly until the final chapter."

Launching the Primary School Premier Khatam Quran ceremony, to mark the completion of learning the Quran, he said the JQaf in schools had brought benefits to the education system and the learning process.

Also present at the function were Education Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein and Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Khir Toyo.

Mooted by Abdullah, the JQaf curriculum has been implemented in 2005 at 1,221 primary

schools nationwide, involving 3,663 teachers and 132,226 students.

Up to now, 2,456 primary schools involving 7,368 teachers and 244,542 pupils have undergone the curriculum.

Hishammuddin said that the programme had been expanded to 1,235 primary schools this year, making a total participation of 2,456 primary schools.

The JQaf programme will be extended to 4,568 schools under the Ninth Malaysia Plan.

A total of 1,180 primary school students who took part in the programme have completed reading the Quran.

The ministry would evaluate

several aspects to strengthen the programme, particularly in terms of training for the teachers, curriculum content, teaching aid and financial allocation.

Hishammuddin said the ministry would use the RM222.4 million allocation under the 9MP to add, replace, alter and upgrade classes linked to the JQaf programme.

An idea to set up the Islamic Education Development Institute has been approved by the Prime Minister to strengthen religious programmes.

Hishammuddin said the institute would be a research and development body of Islam as well as the Arabic language.