

PM calls for revival of Jawi

'Upholding Malay heritage is part of the Federal Constitution'

By **ZAKIAH KOYA**
newsdesk@thestar.com.my

KUALA LUMPUR: Reviving Jawi and upholding the Malay virtues are in line with keeping to the definition of who the Malays are in the Federal Constitution, says Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

The Prime Minister said given that Article 160(2) of the Federal Constitution states that “a Malay” is one who is Muslim, speaks Malay and practises the Malay customs and traditions”, it was high time that the Malays revived Jawi writing, which has aesthetic values.

He said this in his speech at the launch of the book *Budi Asas Tamadun* (Virtue the Basis of Civilisation) and an exhibition titled “Jawi soul of the race, art of cultural milestones” here yesterday.

“The Jawi writing is an integral part of education, socio-culture and the way of life for Malays since Islam came to this region.

“Jawi is also part of the high civilisation of a race which has much aesthetic and humanitarian values.

“As the function and role of jawi is very important in the nation’s history, it is time we revived the heritage of the race,” he said.

Muhyiddin said the Education Ministry also encouraged Jawi through elective subjects.



Warm welcome: Muhyiddin being greeted by Dalbir (left) and Jagir at the Gurdwara in Petaling Jaya.

“In the context of a plural society which has the interest to involve itself in art forms, culture and heritage, it is fair and just if the government gives likewise encouragement,” he added.

At the same function, Dewan Negara Speaker Tan Sri Dr Rais Yatim, who compiled the book comprising 13 writers, said that “budi” (virtue) was not something one learned to pass examinations.

“Virtuosity is something which must be practised. As for Jawi, it does not bite,” he said.

At a press conference after the launch, Rais said although the issue of Jawi in schools had raised controversy not too long ago, the Malays need not apologise for reviving their heritage and culture.

Also present at the launch was Dewan Rakyat Speaker Datuk Seri Azhar Azizan Harun.

The exhibition showcased works in Jawi from calligraphers nationwide.

Earlier, at a high-tea function at the Petaling Jaya Gurdwara ahead of Vaisakhi celebration tomorrow,

the Prime Minister announced that RM4mil would be allocated for managing gurdwaras nationwide and to start a fund for a national Sikh centre.

Muhyiddin noted that Vaisakhi was not only a religious festival for the Sikhs but also an opportunity for Malaysians of all races and religions to appreciate the nation’s multiracial and multireligious history.

“Islam is the official religion but all other religions are free to be practised. We are all therefore brothers and sisters of Malaysia,” he added.

He also hailed the contributions of the Sikh community to the country in all fields and announced a RM3mil allocation for the management of gurdwaras nationwide.

“For the planned National Sikh Centre, I will allocate RM1mil. I am sure there are many generous individuals among the Sikh community who will contribute to this,” said Muhyiddin.

Earlier, in their welcoming speeches, Petaling Jaya Gurdwara president Dalbir Singh and Malaysian Gurdwara Council president Jagir Singh asked that funds be allocated for the upkeep of gurdwaras nationwide and to set up the centre to preserve the culture and heritage of the community.