



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim (centre) greeting students at the SMA Nahdhah Hasanah diamond jubilee celebration in Kubang Pasu yesterday. PIC BY SYAHARIM ABIDIN

POLICY MAKING

'BIGGER JAKIM ROLE TO RAISE ISLAMIC VALUES'

PM says it will weed out hardline Islamic teachings, defuse confrontations between Muslims and non-Muslims

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim yesterday brushed off claims that he has instructed the Malaysian Islamic Development Department (Jakim) to take charge of all systems in the government.

Instead, Anwar said the move to expand Jakim's role in the unity government's policymaking was meant to defuse confrontation between Islam and other religions, stemming from a poor and narrow understanding of true Islamic teachings.

"The minister in charge of Islamic affairs understands that I wanted Jakim to expand its roles beyond just preaching about the religion and not be limited to Islamic legislation.

"The roles of Jakim under my administration as the prime minister and the unity government have been expanded to cover economic affairs, digitalisation programmes and reviewing the education curriculum.

Its roles have expanded so that true Islamic values can be nurtured."

However, there is a small fraction among non-Muslims who did not understand this and has accused Anwar of showing his true Islamist colour that he has been hiding all the while by ordering Jakim to exert control in all (government) systems.

"This is a 'haprak' (useless) view," Anwar said at the SMA Nahdhah Hasanah diamond jubilee celebration in Melele, Kodiang, here, yesterday.

Present were Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Religious Affairs) Datuk Mohd Na'im Mokhtar, Education Minister Fadhlina Sidek and SMA Nahdhah Hasanah principal Mohd Jamil Sadaqi Tajuddin.

Anwar said the move to expand Jakim roles in government policymaking was meant to weed out extreme and hardline Islamic teachings

He said the long-term goal was to defuse confrontations between Muslims and non-Muslims.

"I wish to inform my non-Muslim friends that I am thankful for their support.

"However, they must also understand that if Muslims' knowledge remains remain, with a tendency to punish others, and be fierce with a hardline attitude, it will not attract non-Muslims to Islam.

"So our future will be even more complicated because of the continuous confrontation between the two sides."

He said it was the reason he had established the Karyawan Foun-

dation, which he mooted when he was the finance minister in the late 1990s.

He said the foundation's role was to reproduce *kitab* (religious guidance writings) penned by prominent Islamic scholars, who propagated the true Islamic teachings that emphasised nurturing education, compassion and empathy.

"Many Muslims say they want to uphold Islam, but sadly, all they have is a burning spirit, resulting in them insulting and demeaning others in their preaching without pure knowledge of the religion.

"Whereas, prominent scholars, through their *kitab*, preached about wisdom and compassion.

"That is why, for the sake of our children in the *pondok* institutions, schools under the Education Ministry and the Islamic Religious Affairs Department, we need to uplift their knowledge.

"The level of knowledge of the *ummah* (Muslim community) must be enhanced, not simply punished by attacking others. It will not work.

"We need to focus on education, injecting pure understanding so that there will be no confusion (in the multireligious community)."

Last Sunday, it was reported that Anwar had instructed Jakim to provide greater input to government policymaking.

It was reported that Anwar wanted Jakim to help draft a national development policy framework based on the Malaysia Madani concept.