

PM: Engagement essential in defusing Islamophobia

IPOH: Engagement between Muslims and people from other religions, cultures, and civilisations is crucial in fostering mutual understanding and avoiding misunderstandings that lead to Islamophobia, says Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The Prime Minister said the West, even in the post-colonial period, still retains the old, Orientalist precepts of "The Other," leading to misunderstanding, misinformation, and rejection of

these "others."

"How do you survive and live in a society like multiracial, multi-religious Malaysia, avoid discussing other religions, cultures, and civilisations, and then demand the West must understand us?"

"So, I think it is engagement that is required by us to get others to understand us and for us to understand them," he said in his speech at the Seventh World Conference on Islamic Thought and Civilisation here yesterday.

The Sultan of Perak, Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah, graced the conference and delivered a keynote address.

Anwar said such conferences are important for a better understanding of the Muslim community and for Muslims to understand other faiths and cultures.

"That is why we encourage dialogues and conferences on Islamic matters, which are not only relevant in Malaysia but also the region."

Anwar said that differences involving race and skin colour were created and determined by Allah.

"This is not about tolerance; it is about learning and understanding one another as well as appreciating our differences.

"We must have the courage to continue this engagement. This is to understand, appreciate, and realise the requirements to achieve peace, prosperity, and sustainability," he said.

The World Conference on Islamic Thought and Civilisation, organised by Universiti Sultan Azlan Shah since 2012, attracts participants from more than 21 countries.

The three-day conference aims to provide a platform for regional and international leaders, scholars, intellectuals, professionals, and the public to exchange ideas to address contemporary problems affecting the world.