

# Engage to overcome Islamophobia, says PM

**IPOH:** Engagement between Muslims and others is necessary for fostering mutual understanding and avoiding misunderstandings that lead to Islamophobia, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He said the West, even in the post-colonial period, still retains old precepts of the "other", leading to misunderstandings, misinformation and rejection of the other, which is termed Islamophobia.

"How do you survive and live in a society like multiracial, multireligious Malaysia and avoid discussing other religions, cultures, civilisations, and then demand that 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 7th World Conference on Islamic Thought and Civilisation "Together We Stand: Muslims and Global Humanity" here yesterday.

Anwar also urged Muslims to understand the concept of *ladzatul ma'rifah*, which means sharing knowledge, learning and scholarship.

"You yearn to get the best, to understand and appreciate as much as we have understood the injunction of the *Quran*, using in terms of a very relevant, pertinent terminology, not just tolerance, but *lita'arafu*. It's learning from one another, understanding one another, appreciating the differences.

"My contention is we must have the courage and conviction to continue discourse, the spirit of *ladzatul ma'rifah*, to understand, appreciate and realise that this is a requirement to achieve not only peace and prosperity or even sustainability through reasoned discourse."

The forum, a Perak state event organised by Universiti Sultan Azlan Shah since 2012, has participants from more than 21 countries.

The three-day conference, which started yesterday, 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. - Bernama