

UNITY WEEK

PM: Narrow-mindedness will lead to nation's ruin

JOHOR BARU: Racial sentiments, narrow understanding of religion and parochialism will lead to disunity and sow the seeds of hatred among the people, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He said these must be discarded if people wanted to save the country from ruin.

"Racial sentiments and a narrow understanding of religion will not bring about any blessing, and they neither unite the brotherhood of man nor will they elevate our position.

"These things only bring about discord and sow the seeds of hatred.

"It is the same with parochialism, or extremist views based on an area or state.

"We cannot allow ourselves to say, 'our state is the best' while hating other states.

"Ladies and gentlemen, save our country.

"Our forefathers worked to

unite the races from the time of Malaya to the formation of Malaysia.

"We must defend this."

He said this after launching the national-level Unity Week celebration at Dataran Angsana Johor Baru Mall on Saturday.

Present were Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Onn Hafiz Ghazi, National Unity Minister Datuk Aaron Ago Dagang and Defence Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin.

Anwar urged the younger generation to take up the responsibility of upholding unity and defending the peace.

"Learn from now. This (our multiracial and multireligious country) is our strength."

He said efforts to instil the spirit of unity in society must begin in primary school.

He said this was crucial to foster a strong, united and mutually respectful generation.

He said unity activities should



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim dancing with Orang Asli during the national-level Unity Week celebration in Johor Baru on Saturday. BERNAMA PIC

encompass all groups, including rural areas, starting from school days.

He commended the National Unity initiative to strengthen the Rukun Tetangga (RT) for its potential to spread the spirit of unity.

"The ministry must reach out across the country, not just major cities."

He said Chinese and Tamil vernacular schools must be respected.

"We inherited a system where there are national schools for all

races, as well as Chinese and Tamil schools.

"This diversity reflects the demographic composition of areas, with some comprising 100 per cent Malays, while others have Chinese and Indian majorities.

"The presence of vernacular schools doesn't need to be changed. Our role is to provide space, understanding and respect."

He said differences in race, skin colour and language were acknowledged by the Quran.