

# 'GOVT WON'T TOLERATE BULLYING'

Thuggery, gangsterism rising in universities due to permissive stance, says Anwar

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**T**HE government will not tolerate any bullying, thuggery or gangsterism in educational institutions, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Bullying, he said, had become rampant due to certain parties adopting a permissive stance.

He said the issue of bullying presented a challenge not only to the highest levels of university leadership, but also demanded a holistic response and action from relevant parties.

"Such a thing would not happen if the culture rejects it. The culture of thuggery and gangsterism within our educational system has become madness.

"We talk about knowledge, but not about character and values.

"Hence, we must emphasise values and morals, as we are currently taking a permissive stance towards it.

"This is a small group and does not represent the entire student body, but the culture permits it, a culture of thuggery, bullying and gangsterism within the education system, be it in national, Chinese, Tamil, Maahad Tahfiz or religious schools.

"I will tell the education minister to not tolerate it.

"I am giving a warning and ad-



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim watching a drill by University Pertahanan Nasional Malaysia (UPNM) students yesterday. With him are Defence Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin, Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abd Kadir and UPNM Vice-Chancellor Lieutenant-General Datuk Mardzuki Muhammad. BERNAMA PIC

vice that such things should not happen," he said in the Temu Anwar dialogue at Universiti Pertahanan Nasional Malaysia (UPNM) here yesterday.

Present were Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abd Kadir and Defence Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin.

On Wednesday, the armed forces said it had launched an investigation into a bullying case at UPNM involving a second-year cadet officer at the Military Training Academy (ALK).

The cadet was allegedly bullied and abused by a senior officer using a hot iron, which report-

edly left burn marks on his chest.

This is the second case involving the same method of abuse at UPNM in seven years.

In 2017, the country was shocked by the death of UPNM cadet officer Zulfarhan Osman Zulkarnain, who died from being bullied, beaten and tortured, with most of his body repeatedly pressed with a steam iron.

Six former UPNM students were sentenced to death by hanging by the Court of Appeal for Zulfarhan's murder.

Speaking after the event, Anwar said the UPNM bullying case was a police matter.

He said the management in all education institutions must put a stop to the culture of bullying.

"I am giving general advice on what is happening in schools, secondary schools, Maahad Tahfiz schools and vernacular schools. This must be stopped.

"Headmasters, principals, vice-chancellors and college heads must also, take responsibility for finding ways to put an end to this harmful culture.

"There have been far too many complaints that have surfaced on social media, but this must stop, as it is causing harm to our children," he said.