

JB SLAPPING INCIDENT

Anwar: Mutual respect vital to build civilised nation

KUALA LUMPUR: Religious and racially sensitive issues can be avoided if all parties remain committed to practising mutual respect to build a civilised nation, said the prime minister.

Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's response followed Sunday's incident in Johor, where a 65-year-old man allegedly slapped a non-Muslim youth for eating in public.

This message was conveyed by his senior press secretary, Tunku Nashrul Abaidah, during the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) daily briefing yesterday.

Anwar said such actions must be stopped immediately as they go against the spirit of unity and national harmony.

"What is the use of talking about Islam and its beauty, especially during Ramadan, if it

does not build inner strength and keep us away from harsh attitudes that threaten peace and harmony?" he said.

A video of the incident went viral on Monday.

According to the youth, he had been eating at a convenience store when the man approached him and asked if he was Muslim.

When he replied that he was not, the man allegedly demanded

to see his MyKad, to which the youth refused.

The youth claimed that the man then became angry and slapped him several times.

Another person, claiming to be the man's son, later apologised on his father's behalf, he added.

Anwar said such actions that undermine the spirit of unity and national harmony must be stopped. **By Shahrul Shahabudin**