Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and Jakel Group managing director Datuk Seri Mohamed Faroz Mohamed Jakel admiring a scale model of the Madani Mosque to be built by the company in Kuala Lumpur, yesterday. NSTP PIC BY AIZUDDIN SAAD

TEMPLE RELOCATION

'AMICABLE RESOLUTION SHOWS STRENGTH'

Civilised, ethical and peaceful way of addressing issue reflects Madani values, says Anwar

QISTINA SALLEHUDDIN AND
AUSTIN CAMOENS
KUALA LUMPUR
news@nst.com.my

RESOLVING sensitive issues in the country peacefully and amicably is not a sign of weakness, said Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The prime minister said addressing issues in a civilised, ethical and peaceful manner reflects the Madani values championed by his government.

He said this at the groundbreaking for the Madani Mosque here yesterday.

Present were Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof, Communications Minister Datuk Fahmi Fadzil, Dewan Rakyat Speaker Tan Sri Johari Abdul and Jakel Group managing director Datuk Seri Mohamed Faroz Mohamed Jakel.

The mosque is being developed on private land, a part of which is currently occupied by the Dewi Sri Pathrakaliamman temple.

The Hindu temple will be relocated following negotiations between the authorities, the temple committee and the landowner.

"My instructions have been consistent, even to the mayor and (Federal Territories) minister, which is to negotiate and reach an amicable resolution.

"This is not a sign of weakness, as claimed by certain groups.

"These are Madani values — principles of compassion and kindness, not just for Muslims but for a multiracial society as a whole," he said in his speech.

Anwar also said the resolution of the issue highlighted the wisdom and honour espoused by Islam, rather than arrogance.

"To me, that is *falah* (success and prosperity) when we can emerge as a good example.

"As such, Muslims should embody good character, kindness, compassion and justice, not be known for hostility and hatred," he said.

Anwar said peace was critical to a multiracial nation like Malaysia.

"This is what enables us to move forward. Investors will come, and businesses will flourish. Look around — there are many foreigners here. Why? Because this country is safe.

"I understand that, at times, reactions from certain groups, whether from the Muslim or Hindu community, can be extreme."

He said some people did not think twice before making statements on social media without considering the root of the issue.

"This is what we should be mindful of," he said.

Anwar also expressed gratitude to those involved in resolving the temple issue.

"This includes some of my non-Muslim colleagues — Gobind (Singh Deo) and (Datuk Seri R.) Ramanan — who helped explain the situation.

"If everyone wants to be a hero only for their community, this country will be ruined.

"Some want to be leaders of Malaysia, yet they speak only for their group and defend racial hatred, without regard for the law, truth or falsehood."

Anwar said rights must be based on justice and that he had reviewed full reports before making decisions on the issue.

Community Communications Department director-general Datuk Ismail Yusop said the harmonious resolution of the issue demonstrated the government's success in handling religious sensitivities.

He said Anwar's firm stance that the temple would not be demolished but must adhere to legal procedures exemplified by the Malay adage: *Seperti menarik rambut dalam tepung, rambut jangan putus, tepung jangan berselerak* (resolving a conflict delicately).

"Alhamdulillah, thanks to the prime minister's wisdom in leading the government, this issue was resolved peacefully without racial or religious conflict," Bernama reported him as saying in a Facebook post.