'Restore harmony after temple relocation dispute'

> New mosque committee, Jakel Trading religious scholars should help strengthen ties with people directly or indirectly affected by issue, says PM

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Anwar officiating at the groundbreaking ceremony yesterday. - ***BERNAMAPIC***

PETALING JAYA: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has called on relevant stakeholders to restore harmony with all communities following the dispute over a site earmarked for a mosque where a temple was located.

Anwar said the new mosque committee, textile company Jakel Trading Sdn Bhd and religious scholars should play their roles in strengthening ties with the people, whether they are directly or indirectly affected by the dispute.

"A peaceful nation is a prosperous one. Stability attracts investors and drives business growth. Seeking ethical, respectful resolutions is not a sign of weakness as some critics claim.

"It reflects Madani values - compassion, justice and kindness - not only for Muslims but also for all communities.

"If we only seek to be heroes for our own race, the nation will fracture. True leadership means speaking for all, not inciting division and disregarding truth and justice," he said at the Masjid Madani groundbreaking ceremony near Jalan Masjid India yesterday.

The mosque is being built on *waqf* land owned by Jakel Trading, previously home to the Dewi Sri Pathrakaliamman Temple.

"This is *waqf* land - a mosque must be built here," said Anwar.

The government's decision to construct the new mosque in the city centre was made after careful consideration, ensuring concerns were addressed through meaningful dialogue.

In Islamic law, *waqf* land is permanently dedicated as a charitable endowment, with its benefits reserved for religious or charitable purposes.

Crucially, the land itself is inalienable - it cannot be sold, gifted or inherited.

"My stance in ministerial meetings has been unwavering. Solutions must come through negotiation, no matter the challenges.

"From the start, I have been firm. I support dialogue and compromise, but our decision stands. This mosque will be built."

The decision to build the mosque was made to accommodate the growing number of Muslim congregants in the area.

The four-storey Masjid Madani, spanning 12,142sq ft, will house a library, an event hall and an arts and cultural space to introduce Islam to the wider public.

Located on Jakel-owned land at Lot 328, Jalan Munshi Abdullah, the mosque is set for completion within two years and will accommodate around 2,900 worshippers, including 592 in the main prayer hall.

Jakel Trading said it had acquired the land in 2012 and secured construction approval in 2021.

The company's legal head Aiman Dazuki said construction had been delayed out of respect for the temple's relocation process, adding that it had also offered to cover the associated costs.

On Tuesday, reports confirmed that the temple management had agreed to relocate, resolving the dispute.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Federal Territories) Datuk Seri Dr Zaliha Mustafa said discussions with stakeholders had helped identify a new 4,000sq ft site for the temple, just 50 metres from its original location.