

PM wants universities to be centre of excellence

By Adib Povera - February 22, 2023 @ 7:03pm

KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim wants to transform universities in the country into centres of excellence instead of merely higher education institutions.

Anwar shared his view in his speech at the closing ceremony of the International Conference on AbdulHamid AbuSulayman: His Contributions to Intellectual and Education Reform at the International Islamic University Malaysia's (IIUM) in Gombak near here today.

"In the last few decades, there has been less focus on the development, problems and maintenance of the university.

"And we need to do more. I think I will spend time and discuss this with the Higher Education Minister (Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin).

"I want to ensure a university is not just a university but a centre of excellence," he said.

Present during the ceremony were IIUM rector Professor Emeritus Tan Sri Dzukifli Abdul Razak and International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) president Dr Hisham Altalib.

Also in attendance was the late Professor Emeritus Datuk Dr AbdulHamid AbuSulayman's daughter, Muna AbuSulayman.

Organised by the university's International Institute for Muslim Unity with the cooperation of IIIT and FairFax University of America, the two-day conference was held to discuss and look into the intellectual, scientific as well as practical contributions of AbdulHamid, who was the co-founder of IIIT and second rector of IIUM.

On a separate matter, Anwar called on the Muslim world to not neglect the importance of education and understanding for creative thinking for the struggle of Islam.

Anwar said this when shared with the audience at the conference on AbdulHamid's understanding of the experience and challenges of Sultan Salahuddin Ayyubi.

"We tend to equate him (Salahuddin) as a great warrior and leader who managed to control Baitul Maqdis but AbdulHamid, on the contrary, questioned that notion.

"He (AbdulHamid) said there is no success to the conquest if you fail to understand the first decade of Salahuddin's rule.. the decade of consolidation, the decade of 'dakwah', the decade of education or the decade of making education centres as a centre of excellence.

"(According to AbdulHamid) He (Salahuddin) was able to focus on domestic issues, education and understanding as well as the religious zeal to struggle for Islam.

"This has been largely ignored. That is why, I think in our discourse now, talking about change and struggle, we tend to ignore the importance for education and understanding and creative thinking (in the pursuit for the struggle of Islam)" said Anwar.

Later at the ceremony, Anwar launched books titled "Bringing Higher Education to a Greater Height: A Festschrift in Honour of AbdulHamid AbuSulayman"; "Sixty Years between East and West: Planning, Perseverance and Implementation"; "Bias in Popular Culture: The Power of Visual and Linguistic Narratives" and "Parent-Child Relations a Guide to Raising Children".