

We'll continue to defend judiciary independence at all costs, says PM

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Bernama

Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim assured that the government will continue defending the country's judiciary independence at all costs.

He also rubbished the allegations over disconcerting rumblings' that the executive arm of the organs of the state is interfering with due process and strong-arming the judiciary.

"There is not one iota of truth in these scurrilous allegations, which are now being repeated ad nauseam in the social media.

"Let me reiterate what I have said before: as prime minister, not only have I not encroached upon even a single inch of the sacred terrain of the judiciary, but I shall defend the independence of the judiciary at all costs," he said at the 14th Asean Law Association (ALA) General Assembly 2023 today.

He also said that there was a time in Malaysia's history when certain black sheep of the judiciary, working hand in glove with certain powers that be, committed

gross transgressions against its very institution and feeding the virulent spread of tyranny and arbitrariness on the other.

Anwar makes it clear that the government and those who wield power must be held accountable for their decisions and actions.

“Government must be transparent and that is imperative from the principle of open government.

“Hence, shady dealings and dodgy decisions cannot be used to pool wool over the people’s eyes in the name of the Official Secrets Act,” he said.

“Then, there is the doctrine that laws must be fair and just and that all must have accessibility to the hallowed halls of justice,” he added.

‘Avoid destructive disagreements’

Therefore, the prime minister calls on lawyers to be the champions of justice, fierce advocates for the marginalised and the torchbearers of equality.

“We must strive to ensure that justice is not a commodity only available to those with financial means, but rather a universal right accessible to all, irrespective of their socio-economic status,” he said.

Anwar said that over the past five years, this country has had more than its fair share of politics.

“There are good people on both sides, principled people with different views, yet patriots who love the country. We may differ in perspective, but we share a vision of service to something greater than ourselves. There will be disagreements between us. Vigorous debate is the heartbeat of democracy.

“But there also comes a point where disagreements descend into disruption and discord. This is something that we all must strive to avert,” he said.

Now, Anwar said if the world’s leading investors are placing massive resources into the country, “we must be doing something right” and Malaysia is now poised to reap the benefits of a global rebalancing of centres where critical technologies are produced.

“Whether it is semiconductors, aeroplane parts or medical devices, Malaysia is on the shortlist for companies that are looking for the right balance of talent, infrastructure and cost while insulating themselves from geopolitical risks.”

Anwar said that he heard this personally from many of the chief executive officers of the Fortune 500 companies he met in New York last month.

“But efforts to attract these companies will come to nought if we continue this relentless campaign to destabilise and undermine the government at every step,” he said.

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