

## **PM calls for unity to spur country to greater heights**

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**Bernama**

Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim tonight stressed the importance of unity among Malaysians, irrespective of race or religion, to elevate the nation to greater and dignified heights.

In his special address in conjunction with Hari Raya Aidilfitri tomorrow, Anwar said the country cannot marginalise or antagonise any group or community, regardless of whether they are in the majority or minority, for any reason.

However, he said, the framework of nation-building should not underestimate the importance of Islam as the religion of the federation and the advancement of syariah law in the country.

“In fact, we must stand firm, be resolute and not be seen unwavering in our commitment to instil values and build a dignified nation.

“However, let us not view this as a pretext to belittle, insult or disrupt the cultural practices and ways of life of others,” he said.

The prime minister's address was broadcast over local television networks.

"This is the balance, the equilibrium that needs to be preserved in the Malaysian spirit of celebrating this blessed Aidilfitri," he said.

Anwar called on the people to grasp the true essence of Aidilfitri, a time when Muslims celebrate their triumph in returning to the core of humanity through the sanctity of Ramadan, which serves as a spiritual platform for abandoning harmful practices and customs.

He emphasised the need for steadfastness in pursuit of victory, highlighting that success in any endeavour requires patience, wisdom and meticulous planning to maintain the balance essential for nation-building.

"Impetuosity will only lead to failure, and the present administration must leverage the insights and wisdom of past statesmen to avoid pitfalls and enhance the nation's welfare.

"We do not just demand recognition and praise; constructive criticism and counsel are equally vital for the country. The nation must foster values to fortify human dignity," he added.

**Seek forgiveness**

Anwar also urged Malaysians, particularly Muslims, to use the occasion of Aidilfitri to seek forgiveness for misunderstandings and wrongdoings.

He highlighted the Malaysian tradition of saying “maaf zahir dan batin” (seeking forgiveness for both physical and emotional wrongs) during Aidilfitri as a unique practice not found among Muslims in other countries.

“This tradition captures the true spirit of Islam, which is about seeking and granting forgiveness. We all err. Let us not be too proud to claim that we are perfect.

“There have been past conflicts marked by profanity, harsh words and anger. As such, make use of this opportunity to sincerely seek forgiveness,” he said.

Anwar also extended apologies to all Muslims and Malaysians if any of his words or actions had inadvertently caused hurt.

“We pray for resilience to foster unity, drive growth, show compassion to those less fortunate, empower the people and achieve success. Malaysia must remain strong and prosperous,” he said as he extended Aidilfitri greetings to the Muslim community.

Anwar also advised those travelling back to their hometowns for the celebration

to exercise caution on the road and keep their loved ones in their thoughts, ensuring a safe journey for everyone involved.

- Bernama

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