

PM: Malaysia needs quantum leap to become developed nation

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Bernama

Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said Malaysia requires a quantum leap if the country aspires to become a developed nation.

Speaking as the moderator at the fifth series of the Malaysia Madani Scholars Forum (FIM) yesterday, he said that in today's context, achieving developed nation status cannot be accomplished through the usual pace of change.

"Any rapid change will inevitably bring about issues, whether political or social tension, but if we ask ourselves whether we have a choice, the answer is no.

"If there is no choice, then brace ourselves and leap," he said.

Anwar made the remarks while concluding the discussion "The Role of Government-Linked Investment Companies in Transforming Companies: Balancing Profit and Responsibility to Spark a Creative Nation".

The forum also featured Plantation and Commodities Minister Johari Abdul

Ghani, Khazanah Nasional managing director Amirul Feisal Wan Zahir, and Khazanah Research Institute chairperson Nungsari Ahmad Radhi.

Also present was Higher Education Minister Zambray Abd Kadir.

Stop harping on race, religion

Anwar also stressed the need to shift public consciousness, encouraging citizens to focus on more important matters necessary for progress, rather than being preoccupied with racial and religious issues.

“I’m not saying race or religion are unimportant, but that narrative tires us out and holds us back.

“Other nations are now talking about energy, artificial intelligence (AI), but when we look at by-election campaigns, we are inundated with claims like selling the state to China, matters that are exhausting. Therefore, the theoretical construct must be corrected.

“We need a new approach and change, but I believe the spirit of change is emerging among the people. This is not solely the responsibility of certain politicians,” the Tambun MP added.

US tariffs

Meanwhile, Anwar said the government must also make bold and swift decisions to safeguard national interests, such as joining the Brics economic cooperation group, as overdependence on established traditional markets is no longer healthy.

As for Asean, Anwar said that apart from discussions on the traditional notion of Asean centrality and peace, the focus is also on intra-Asean trade, investment competitiveness and external pressures.

Anwar said the actions of US President Donald Trump in imposing retaliatory tariffs had prompted the European Union (EU) to request the acceleration of a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Asean.

“(Before this) Asean had pleaded for the FTA with the EU to be signed, but the EU had complicated matters and outright refused.

“However, when the tariffs were imposed, the EU now wants us to expedite the process, so we must act swiftly in such circumstances,” he said.

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