



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim greeting a guest at the opening of the 63rd Malaysia International Al-Quran Recital and Memorisation Assembly at World Trade Centre Kuala Lumpur on Saturday, PIC BY HAIRUL ANUAR RAHIM

UNWAVERING COMMITMENT

PM VOWS TO PROTECT ISLAM AMID UNITY DRIVE

Anwar says as leader of a diverse nation, he must ensure fairness for all citizens

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has reaffirmed his commitment to preserving the sanctity of Islam while ensuring the well-being of individuals from all ethnicities and faiths in Malaysia.

As the leader of a diverse nation, he emphasised his responsibility to ensure a comfortable standard of living and fairness for all citizens, regardless of racial or religious backgrounds.

Anwar said his commitment to Islam was unwavering and he pledged to allocate resources for Islamic education, understanding and reforms.

He also underscored his commitment to protecting the rights of non-Muslim citizens, including Christians, Hindus and Buddhists, fostering harmony and unity among the people.

"I want to reassure and continuously reiterate that in this country, though Islam is the official religion of the federation, I will make no apologies for defending the faith, continuing to uphold the sanctity of the religion, continuing to promote Islam and providing enough allo-

cation and support for training, for the understanding of Islam and implementing Islamic programmes and reforms.

"I make no apologies that this country, in the name of the ummah, the rights of every single citizen, including non-Muslims, whether they are Christians, Hindus or Buddhists will be protected. We make no apologies, I reiterate.

"To secure peace in this country, we must foster this understanding, which I believe is very much consistent with the faith," he said in his welcome remarks at the opening of the 63rd Malaysia International Al-Quran Recital and Memorisation Assembly (MTHQA63) at World Trade Centre Kuala Lumpur on Saturday.

Present were Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Religious Affairs) Datuk Dr Mohd Nai'm Mokhtar and Terengganu Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Samsuri Mokhtar.

Also present was the prime minister's wife, Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail.

Anwar called on Malaysia's Muslim community to play a role in realising the aspirations outlined in the Malaysia Madani concept.

"It is our responsibility to realise Malaysia Madani. This can be done by elevating the status and position of the ummah. We can achieve this if we remain united.

"We achieve it if we intensify efforts to understand the Quran. By reciting and understanding the Quran, we will better understand Islam's position in a multi-racial country."

Themed "Perpaduan Teras

Malaysia Madani" (Unity the core of Malaysia Madani), MTHQA will run until Aug 24.

Seventy-two people from 52 countries are taking part this year; 36 from 27 countries are participating in the recital category, and the remaining in the *hafazan* (memorisation) category.

In the recital category, Malaysia is represented by Muhammad Qayyim Nizar Sarimi, who is visually impaired and from Kelantan, and Nor Hidayah Abd Rahman, who is from Terengganu.

In the memorisation category, Ahmad Ikmal Mohd Ridhuan from Johor and Dian Karisma Mohd Japar from Sabah are representing Malaysia.

Anwar said he would meet Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in New York next month.

The meeting will discuss how to collaboratively address and combat Islamophobia globally. This came following a telephone conversation between the leaders earlier this month.

The leaders highlighted the need for a comprehensive approach to counter attacks on Islam, especially in places such as the United States and Europe.

In his speech at an event in Permatang Pauh early this month, Anwar said Malaysia and Turkiye would cooperate to tackle Islamophobia globally.

Erdogan reportedly proposed an endeavour to spearhead a movement to counter negative narratives about Islam.

Anwar responded affirmatively, saying they would develop a working paper and hold discussions to solidify the initiative.