



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim waving the Jalur Gemilang at the event to deliver his National Day address at the Putrajaya International Convention Centre yesterday. Flanking him are his deputies, Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof (left) and Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi. BERNAMA PIC

SOCIAL CONTRACT

'WE'LL PROTECT RIGHTS OF EVERY MALAYSIAN'

Anwar says unity govt will defend the nation from attempts to dampen spirit, unity

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THE unity government will continue to defend the rights of every person in Malaysia, said Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The prime minister said the Madani government would defend the country from attempts to dampen the nation's spirit and unity.

"The country's problem is not that we have different races, cultures or religions. God made us different for us to know and respect one another, and we must accept that fact.

"Nobody can question the absolute provision in the Federal Constitution, the rights of Islam (as the religion of the federation), and the rights of Malays and Bumiputera.

"The country has been strong and will continue to be strong by acknowledging the social contract among all races and guaranteeing the rights of citizens to practise their religion and culture."

Anwar said this in his National Day address at the Putrajaya International Convention Centre in front of more than 6,000 people.

Present were his deputies, Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof, as well as other cabinet ministers.

Anwar said Merdeka (independence) also meant that all resources and machinery in the country should be used to give back to the people and to uplift the country's dignity.

"I am confident that with this spirit, Malaysia will emerge as a great nation in Southeast Asia.

"This is with the condition that the spirit of our forefathers, our unity, and acceptance that we are independent, and all races — Malays and Bumiputeras, together with our other friends, Chinese, Indians, Orang Asli, along with Melanau, Dayak, Dusun, Kadazan, Bajau, Suluk and others — defend the country for Malaysians.

"And what is this unity for? It is to ensure our future through the policies implemented from today."

He urged people to understand the true meaning of independence and be free of old-fashioned thinking.

"What is the meaning of independence if our souls are still backwards? What is the use of having full potential if we are still trapped in our captive minds?

"We should use the time we have wisely to create strategies,

work hard to raise the dignity of our country and serve our families and our community."

Meanwhile, he promised that schools, whether national or vernacular, would have basic facilities and infrastructure before the end of October.

"To me, this is far more meaningful to the millions of students and parents than any landmark or megabuildings."

He added that Malaysia must not only be known for grand landmarks, the tallest buildings or the longest bridges, but also for guaranteeing people's justice, including the marginalised.

"This is what we meant by freedom of thoughts and souls. A soul that is 'Merdeka' is not impressed with megabuildings... a soul that is free wants to bring justice to all, and not just for the elite few."

This year's National Day celebrations will take place in Putrajaya. Themed "Malaysia Madani: Tekad Perpaduan, Penuhi Harapan" (Determination in Unity, Fulfilling Hope), the celebration will feature a parade and airshow.

A 30-minute Malaysia Madani performance will be the curtain-raiser, with some 100,000 visitors targeted.

Page 1 pic: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim waving the Jalur Gemilang with attendees after delivering his National Day address at the Putrajaya International Convention Centre yesterday.