

'Govt depts should not entertain letters not written in Malay'

CYBERJAYA: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said government departments and offices should not entertain letters not written in Malay to uphold the national language.

He said letters not in Malay, especially those from local companies and universities, would be returned.

He said empowering the culture of the national language was an integral part of nation building.

"Sometimes, there is confusion. We stress on the use of English for trade, but some civil servants, including in universities, and private sectors have strayed from the

path and have forgotten and neglected the basics.

"When communicating with government offices, it should be in Malay.

"If local companies write letters in languages other than the national language, they will be returned," he said in his speech at the launch of the National Language Decade Carnival and National Reading Decade.

Present were Education Minister Fadhlina Sidek, Public Service Department director-general Datuk Dr Zulkapli Mohamed, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka board of directors chairman Datuk Dr An-

war Ridhwan and Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Razarudin Husain.

Anwar said he was not belittling other languages, but was giving a reminder on empowering the national language as part of nation building.

He said in the efforts to get Malaysians to upgrade, explore more technologies and reach for the skies, we should not forget our roots.

"One of the most important roots is the national language.

"Madani focuses on empowering the economy, including new sectors such as technology and

digital, but all these need to go hand-in-hand with empowering culture, including the use of the national language."

He called on higher education institutions and schools to empower the use of the national language.

On another matter, Anwar expressed his optimism that the new generation would preserve the reading culture, which had declined as technology and digitalisation developed.

Citing thinkers who talk about technological change, he said there were some concerns as they found that the younger genera-

tion lacked interest in reading.

To rework the culture of reading, he advised all parties to heed the warnings of prominent local and international thinkers.

"To continue imparting wisdom to the Madani nation, we must reach for the stars, explore new spheres of thought, spark ideas and track the evolution of the digital world and digital transformation.

"We in Malaysia should take lessons from their (thinkers) criticism. The task of educators, teachers and lecturers is to provide encouragement to cultivate the culture of reading."