

PM keen on development of arts, culture, tourism

PUTRAJAYA: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim wants Malaysian arts and culture to be empowered, in line with the country's economic progress, with the Tourism, Arts and Culture Ministry being its prime driver.

"This is why the ministry's role is important, along with programmes that will be able to elevate arts, poetry, film and theatre as well as performances and dance.

"Not many countries can showcase arts and culture with the Malays playing a central role, as with other ethnicities from Perlis to Sabah," he said when officiating the Putrajaya Cultural Festival 2023 on Saturday.

Anwar said Malaysia's multi-

racial society must embrace differences as a point of strength rather than use them as reasons for conflict.

"I believe rational people who love their country and respect human values, view the racial, ethnic and cultural differences as a strength because diversity makes our beloved Malaysia great."

Describing the tourism sector as an important contributor to the national economy, Anwar gave his assurance that the government will focus specifically on the sector in Budget 2024.

He suggested that the Putrajaya Cultural Festival 2023, which is being held for the first time, be made an annual event in the

ministry's calendar.

The festival, which ended yesterday, was organised by the ministry in collaboration with strategic partners, namely Putrajaya Corporation and Istana Budaya, with the aim of making local and international communities more aware of Malaysian cultural, arts and tourism activities and promoting various tourism products in the country.

Among the interesting activities held during the four-day programme were the Putrajaya Culture Fun Run & Gathering, which featured a 5km run in traditional attire, as well as traditional and creative stage performances revolving around

the spirit of independence, heritage food demonstrations, sales of handicraft and cultural, art and tourism competitions.

Tourism, Arts and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Tiong King Sing said in addition to attracting tourists, the festival could foster a spirit of unity in multi-ethnic and multi-religious Malaysian society.

"Malaysia's ethnic and cultural diversity has made the country a popular international tourist destination. The ministry will ensure that continuous initiatives and strategies are taken to promote interesting arts and cultural tourism destinations," he said in his speech at the event.
- Bernama