

# 'Fresh ideas with moral values can unlock our potential'

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**PUTRAJAYA:** Ideas grounded in principles and ethical values will help Malaysia unlock its potential as a just, prosperous and progressive nation, says Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The Prime Minister said while the nation has the capacity to develop and refine its ideas, the quality and intent behind those ideas are critical.

"An idea can grow and flourish, but it can also create chaos. This is why the dissection and evaluation of ideas are essential," he said at the Putrajaya Festival of Ideas, an initiative aimed at popularising ideas and promote Malaysia as a regional and global centre for intellectual discourse and innovation.

To ensure ideas result in positive impact, it must also be grounded in a framework of values, including goodness and humanity, Anwar added.

"Ideas without morality and conscience can lead to destruction or confusion. They must stem from a good heart, grounded in moral and ethical values," he said.

The Prime Minister said the Festival of Ideas could be the platform to inspire critical thinking, creativity and innovation - particularly among the youth.

Highlighting the importance of balancing tradition and progress, Anwar said Malaysia must remain rooted in its identity, culture, language and religious beliefs while striving to embrace advancements in areas like mathematics, artificial intelligence and renewable energy.

"Our aim to reach for the sky is not about abandoning our roots



**Meeting of the minds:** Anwar shaking hands with 12-year-old Izz Imil Shahrom, Universiti Malaya's youngest ever undergraduate, during the Putrajaya Festival of Ideas held at Putrajaya International Convention Centre. - Bernama

but about progressing without being left behind," Anwar said, criticising those who exploit divisive issues rooted in racial sentiment.

"Those with shallow minds will look at racial narratives. For example, when speaking to the Malays, they'll evoke a sense of challenge just because a poster might be in Chinese.

"Similarly, the Chinese community may feel provoked when their rights are denied, and in Sabah and Sarawak, we see a steady erosion of rights," he said.

Calling on the youth to move beyond such divisive rhetoric, the Prime Minister encouraged them to engage in critical enlightenment and to dissect issues thoughtfully and constructively.

"Patriotism, after all, can sometimes become the last refuge of the scoundrel," he added.

Foreign nations, Anwar said, view Malaysia and Asean as one of the most peaceful regions in the world with rapid economic growth.

This perspective, he said, was conveyed to him during his recent

official visits abroad, including to China, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Peru, Brazil and South Korea.

Anwar said Malaysia in particular has become a model nation due to its multicultural, multi-religious and multiracial society, while maintaining a strong sense of unity.

"Outsiders observe Malaysia and remark that it is among the most complex countries to govern, with its diverse 'quirks' and mix of skin colours, yet it exhibits a remarkable spirit of unity and peace," he said.