

# PM: REJECT ATTEMPTS TO DIVIDE NATION

Malaysia must remain strong by defending unity, respecting others, says Anwar

LUQMAN HAKIM  
SERDANG  
news@nst.com.my

**P**RIME Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim urges Malaysians to reject attempts to divide the nation along racial, religious or regional lines, stressing that unity is the foundation of the country's strength.

In his address yesterday for the National Day celebration, he said the struggle for independence succeeded because Malays, Chinese, Indians, Sabahans and Sarawakians stood together as one.

"The attempt to divide the nation along racial, tribal or regional lines must be firmly and decisively resisted. This is because Malaysia is more important than villages, groups or districts.

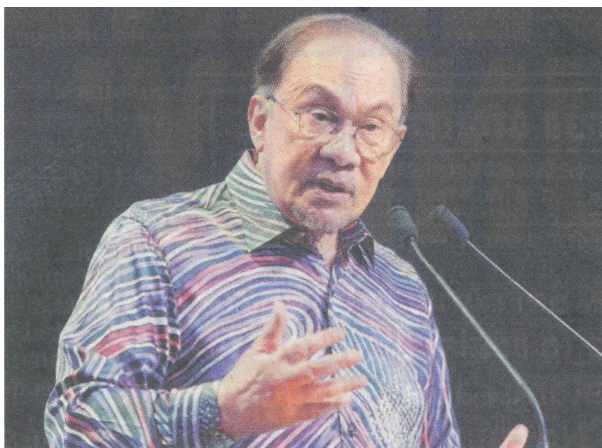
"No country can survive if it gives in to the incitement of hatred between races.

"I am still Malay and I am proud of my language and the greatness of Malay culture.

"But it is not right if this pride erases, belittles or insults others. This is not about glorifying one's strength by humiliating others."

Anwar reminded Malaysians of Islam's teaching of *ta'aruf* (knowing and recognising one another), which goes beyond tolerance.

"In the Quran, it is not just tolerance. It is *ta'aruf*, which means to know, to respect and to honour one another. This is the



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim giving his National Day address in Serdang yesterday.  
NSTP PIC BY AIZUDDIN SAAD

uniqueness of Islam."

He said extremism, whether in language, race or religion, had destroyed many countries and urged Malaysians to learn from those lessons.

"Malaysia must remain strong by defending unity. Respect others and believe that human dignity is raised not by language, culture or race, but by piety."

He said independence was not achieved easily, but through the sacrifice of lives, property and generations of struggle.

"There were too many sacrifices of lives, property, tears and sweat. I call on youth to see and to learn that what we now enjoy came at a price, not cheaply.

"Preserve this nation. This country is unique. It is the only one with so many races and religions that has remained strong in its security, economy, unity and culture compared with others in the region and the world."

He paid tribute to past leaders for shaping the nation's path to independence.

"The late Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj carried the banner, supported by the strength of the

Malays as the core, joined by Indians, Chinese and later leaders from Sarawak and Sabah, leading to the creation of a new, independent and sovereign nation on Sept 16."

On his administration, he said fiscal discipline did not come at the expense of the people or the states, including those under the opposition.

"When we took over, the deficit was 5.6 per cent. In the first year, we brought it down to 5 per cent, then 4.1 per cent. This year, it is 3.8 per cent. That is a record.

"Wages have gone up. It is not that we cut the deficit and wages went down.

"We cut the deficit, but spending for all states has gone up, including states led by the opposition, such as Perlis, Kedah, Kelantan and Terengganu."

He said the government's determination to protect the public drove it to dismantle cartels that controlled essential goods for decades.

He said the action against cartels was part of a broader mission to free the nation from corruption, smuggling and illegal activities.