

DIVERSITY IS OUR STRENGTH, SAYS PM

Foreigners often impressed with Malaysia's culture, says Anwar

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THE heritage of Malaysia's diverse communities should be a source of inspiration and collective strength, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He said the nation's arts and cultural heritage was most meaningful when its Malay foundation thrived in harmony with Chinese, Indian, Iban, Kadazan, Bajau and other traditions.

Reflecting on the Malaysian Cultural Festival in Titiwangsa on Saturday night, Anwar said the event highlighted that Malaysia's strength lay in the diversity that united its people.

"I was captivated by the dance and musical performances that celebrated Malaysia's cultural diversity," he said in a Facebook post.

Anwar thanked everyone in-

involved in making the festival a success.

"May it continue to promote togetherness, strengthen friendships, and showcase Malaysia as a country of prosperity, peace and rich cultural heritage."

In his speech at the festival, Anwar said the country's economic growth must be aligned with the empowerment of its cultural identity.

He said that while economic empowerment was central, the true goal was to develop the people.

He said; the festival reflected Malaysia's Strength in embracing diversity, With each community contributing to the nation's cultural wealth.

"This is Malaysia's strength, unlike the view of small groups who believe only their perspective is correct and are unwilling to accept differences," he said.

He said the national language united the country, but Malaysia also upheld the rights of all communities to preserve their languages.

To face global challenges, he added, Malaysians must master international languages, including English.

He said foreign dignitaries, including presidents, monarchs

and prime ministers, were often impressed with Malaysia's cultural showcases, which featured colourful performances and songs in various languages.

"This proves to the world that Malaysians accept and celebrate diversity. Tourists who attend these festivals are even more amazed by our ability to live in harmony."

He congratulated the Tourism, Arts and Culture Ministry and its agencies for organising the festival.

The event featured more than 68 cultural activities, including wayang kulit, menora, silat demonstrations, traditional dances, heritage food showcases and international competitions.

He said the turnout of Malaysians and foreign visitors showed that the festival could generate significant economic benefits for the country.

Present were Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Shamsul Azri Abu Bakar; Tourism, Arts and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Tiong King Sing; Deputy Tourism, Arts and Culture Minister Khairul Firdaus Akbar Khan; and Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Federal Territories) Datuk Seri Dr Zaliha Mustafa.