

Bukit Bintang aglow with launch of 'I LITE U' project

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's peaceful environment and harmonious multiracial society remain key drivers of the country's strong tourism growth, said Prime Minister Oatuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He said Malaysia's rich cultural diversity, spanning all states from Perlis to Sabah and Sarawak, is a source of national pride that must be preserved collectively.

He was speaking at the launch of the "I LITE U" lighting innovation project at Pavilion Bukit Bintang on Saturday.

Anwar expressed appreciation to the ministers involved for ensuring that the event was organised in a peaceful and orderly atmosphere.

He added that Kuala Lumpur reflects the country's spirit of coexistence.

"Hannah Yeoh (Minister in the Prime Minister's Department-Federal Territories) is taking care of Kuala Lumpur now. See how peaceful and calm it is. All races are here. Keep it up. Thank you my fellow colleagues. We do it together."

Also present were Housing and Local Government Minister Nga Kor Ming, Hannah, Tourism, Arts and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Tiong King Sing, Communications Minister Datuk Fahmi Fadzil as well as several other ministers and deputy ministers.

The launch was further enlivened by the presence of Oscar-winning actress Tan Sri Michelle Yeoh, who is also a United Nations Development Programme goodwill ambassador.

Anwar thanked her for attending the event and described her as a disciplined and versatile actress who had made Malaysia proud on the global stage.

"It is a rare honour and a real pleasure for all Malaysians that we have with us the outstanding and the first Asian Oscar winner," he said, reflecting on her journey from a small town in Perak to international acclaim.

The "I LITE U" project is a strategic initiative aimed at enhancing Kuala Lumpur's urban landscape and strengthening its global tourism appeal ahead of Visit Malaysia 2026 (VM2026).

Spanning nearly one kilometre around Bukit Bintang, the project features more than 70 energy-efficient LED installations, including hanging lights, moon lights and fairytale-themed designs.

It focuses on improving pedestrian safety and comfort, facilitating night-time access to tourist hotspots and supporting the low-carbon city agenda.

The initiative forms part of broader efforts to differentiate Kuala Lumpur from other global cities through urban lighting while positioning the capital as a safe, inclusive and vibrant destination.

The launch drew strong interest from locals and foreign visitors, reflecting growing optimism over Malaysia's tourism prospects following the kick-off of the VM2026 campaign on New Year's Eve.

Interior designer Tong Kok Ying, 50, from Petaling Jaya, said he stopped by after noticing the stage setup while passing through the area.

"It really caught my attention, especially when I heard there would be performances. I was looking forward to the prime minister's launch of the project and the moment when the entire street would light up," he said, adding that he felt proud to see Malaysia's tourism efforts gaining international attention.

Teacher Sazliana Armawansah, 39, from Sabah, who was transiting in Kuala Lumpur after returning from Vietnam, said the installation was visually striking and unique.

Foreign visitors praised the festive atmosphere as reinforcing Malaysia's image as a welcoming destination.

Under VM2026, Malaysia is targeting



Anwar, Nga and Michelle at the event in Kuala Lumpur. - ADAM AMIR HAMZAH/THESUN

28 million tourist arrivals and RM76 billion in tourism receipts, with initiatives such as "I LITE U" expected to play a key role in sustaining momentum and enhancing visitor experience.