

PM ANWAR URGES MALAYSIANS TO TRANSFORM COUNTRY INTO A GREAT NATION
DATO' SERI ANWAR BIN IBRAHIM
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PUTRAJAYA, Aug 30 (Bernama) — Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim today delivered his maiden National Day address as the prime minister, underscoring most of all the importance of unity in safeguarding the country's independence on the road to transforming Malaysia into a great nation.

He said this can be achieved as Malaysia has an abundant workforce that can be transformed into technology experts and professionals for the country to compete with any other in the world.

“Between ambition and hope, the country must unite and formulate a sustainable MADANI economy and also guarantee justice for its multi-racial and multi-religious people.

“Let's take advantage of the time we have left in our lives to serve ourselves, our family and our community and be assured that this is no ordinary nation. This country has rich and bountiful resources,” he said when addressing a crowd of over 7,000 people at the Putrajaya International Convention Centre (PICC) here today.

Also present at the event, which was also broadcast live on local television, were the two deputy prime ministers, Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof, Cabinet Ministers, senior government officials, community representatives and students.

Anwar said one of the conditions needed to meet those aspirations was “to free the people” by shaping a society that is ‘independent’ in mind and soul and free from colonialist and outmoded thinking.

The prime minister said to ensure Malaysia progresses, all levels of society must push forth with a ‘spirit of freedom’ by not being exploited and being tools of the elite bent on making personal gains that harm the country.

In addition, he said unity among the races was vital in ensuring Malaysia emerged as a great nation in this century after a mediocre performance over the past 20 years.

Anwar said the Unity Government guarantees that the rights of all Malaysians will be defended, with no one marginalised, but added that matters enshrined in the Constitution, such as Bumiputera rights and privileges, and Islam as the Federal religion, will continue to be defended.

“We have to defend this spirit, that this country belongs to all the people. This unity (needs) to be nurtured to guarantee its future from now on,” he said.

Anwar said to transform Malaysia into a great nation, education was an important asset that needs to be stressed to produce a generation of experts in various fields.

In this regard, the prime minister gave his assurance that all schools will be equipped with basic infrastructure of reasonable standards by the end of this year.

“Malaysia must be known for its guarantee of justice for all its citizens, including the marginalised,” he said.

Reminding Malaysians of the importance of independence that the country has enjoyed for the past six decades, Anwar said the challenge faced today is for the people to unite and preserve peace and independence.

Also remembering and honouring the country's freedom fighters and security forces, especially the Royal Malaysian Police (PDRM) and the Malaysian Armed Forces (ATM), he said the peace enjoyed currently would have been impossible without them.

“Just like how it was when we faced insurgents in Lahad Datu (Sabah), and before that the Indonesian Confrontation and communist threats, we will deal with it (and) although small episodes (of security threats) still happen now and then and there are border claims, we will defend every inch of our beloved Malaysia,” he said.

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