

**M'SIAN ARTS, CULTURE MUST BE EMPOWERED IN TANDEM WITH
ECONOMIC PROGRESS – PM ANWAR
DATO' SERI ANWAR BIN IBRAHIM
NEWS
01 OCTOBER 2023**

PUTRAJAYA, Sept 30 (Bernama) — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim wants Malaysian arts and culture to be empowered, in line with the country's economic progress, with the Tourism, Arts and Culture Ministry being the prime driver towards that purpose.

“And that is why MOTAC's role is important along with programmes that will be able to elevate the arts; poetry; film and theatre; performances and dance.

“Not many countries can showcase arts and culture with the Malays playing a central role, as with other ethnicities from Perlis to Sabah,” he said when officiating the Putrajaya Cultural Festival 2023 here tonight.

Anwar said Malaysia's multi-racial society must embrace differences as a point of strength rather than use them as reasons for conflict.

“I believe rational people who love their country and respect human values... they view the racial, ethnic and cultural differences as a strength because diversity makes our beloved Malaysia great,” he said.

Describing the tourism sector as an important contributor to the national economy, Anwar, who is also Finance Minister, assured that the government will focus specifically on allocations in Budget 2024 to be tabled in Parliament in October.

He said MOTAC must have faith that the government will focus on the tourism industry, including the empowerment of the arts and culture industry, while also praising and appreciating MOTAC's efforts in organising the Putrajaya Cultural Festival 2023, which is being held for the first time.

Anwar also suggested that the festival be made an annual event in the MOTAC calendar.

The Putrajaya Cultural Festival 2023 which is taking place from Sept 28 to tomorrow (Oct 1), is organised by MOTAC in collaboration with strategic partners, namely Putrajaya Corporation (PPj) and Istana Budaya, which aims to bring the general and international community closer to Malaysian cultural, arts and tourism activities and promote various tourism products available in the country.

Themed "Unity Through Arts and Culture", the programme also aims to strengthen harmony and the spirit of unity through art, culture and heritage.

Among the interesting activities arranged throughout the four days of the programme are the Putrajaya Culture Fun Run & Gathering which features a five-kilometre run in traditional attire; traditional and creative stage performances revolving around the spirit of independence; art care; heritage food demonstrations; sale of handicraft as well as cultural, art and tourism competitions.

— BERNAMA

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Source: <https://www.pmo.gov.my/2023/10/msian-arts-culture-must-be-empowered-in-tandem-with-economic-progress-pm-anwar/>