

PARLIAMENT

MALAYSIA

ROYAL ADDRESS

BY HIS MAJESTY

SERI PADUKA BAGINDA YANG DI-PERTUAN AGONG XVII

SULTAN IBRAHIM IBNI ALMARHUM SULTAN ISKANDAR

THIRD SESSION

FIFTEENTH PARLIAMENT

26th FEBRUARY 2024

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullaahi Wabarakaatuh.

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim,

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious and Most Merciful. All praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Universe. Blessings and salutations to our Esteemed Prophet Muhammad, the noble Messenger, and to his family and companions.

Honourable President of the Senate, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Members of the Senate and Members of the House of Representatives, and greetings to all present.

Alhamdulillah, I am grateful to Allah the Almighty for His Leave and Munificence that I am able to attend the Opening Ceremony of the Third Session of the Fifteenth Parliament on this auspicious morning.

Today's ceremony is extremely meaningful to me as this is my inaugural appearance at Parliament after being sworn in as the Seventeenth Yang di-Pertuan Agong on 31st January 2024.

On this occasion, I express my deepest appreciation to Their Majesties the Sultan of Pahang and Tengku Ampuan of Pahang for their wise and benevolent reign of the country and the people over the past five years.

Insya Allah, by His abundant grace and permission, I will shoulder the trust bestowed upon Me honestly and sincerely and continue with an

administration that prioritises the prosperity of the nation and the wellbeing of the people.

I congratulate the Prime Minister and members of the administration of the Government for their good governance in managing the country. My advice is to constantly feel the pulse of the people as it is the responsibility of the Government to promote their wellbeing.

Honourable Members,

2. My reign as the Yang di-Pertuan Agong will emulate that of the previous Yang di-Pertuan Agong in accordance with the Federal Constitution and the established policies and regulations that are in place.

3. My role here is to fulfil the responsibilities and trust of the Malay Rulers in ensuring that the nation's sovereignty and prosperity as well as the wellbeing of the people will always be preserved.

4. I therefore urge all parties, whether seated to my right or my left, let us be united, work together and collaborate to develop the country for the benefit of all Malaysians.

5. In my view, the success or failure of our country does not rest solely on the shoulders of the Prime Minister but is the responsibility of all 222 Members of the House of Representatives who have been entrusted by the people to represent them in the Government.

6. All parties should be aware that the wellbeing of more than 33 million Malaysians is my utmost priority. Therefore, I hope that all Members of the House will focus their efforts on safeguarding the people.

7. I would also like to emphasise that I will not entertain any request from any party that may compromise the political stability of the country. All parties must accept the prevailing order and respect the Unity Government that has been formed. Anyone seeking to play politics should wait for the next general elections.

8. I would like to remind that this Parliament is the place where laws are enacted and that Honourable Members of the House are the legislators. Therefore, it would be inconceivable if legislators themselves do not comply with the rules that they themselves have made.

9. Accordingly, I hope that all Members of the House will set a good example and abide by the rules throughout the proceedings in this august House.

Honourable Members,

10. I note that even after more than 60 years since the formation of Malaysia, unity among the different races is still lacking as there are members of the current generation who have failed to master the national language and appreciate the diverse cultures of the other races. I therefore call on the Government to formulate a policy aimed at ensuring unity that is stronger and more harmonious among the people.

11. There is a Malay proverb which goes, “*melentur buluh biarlah dari rebungnya*” which means that early influences have a lasting impact. Likewise, if we want a future generation that is united and one that understands each other, it must be shaped from young.

12. I also call on all levels of society to strengthen national unity and not to incite emotions by harping on the 3R (race, religion and royalty) issues.

13. We are all cognisant of the fact that the Federal Constitution is the supreme law of the land which must be respected. This was the result of the agreement among the Malay Rulers to establish a Federation and to empower Parliament to enact laws.

14. The Federal Constitution recognises Islam as the religion of the Federation and this will continue to be preserved. However, other religions can be practised in peace and harmony but they should not be used to proselytise Muslims. Therefore, there should not be attempts by any party to manipulate and politicise this basic foundation of the Constitution.

15. I am satisfied with the steps taken by the Government in resolving matters related to the Malaysia Agreement 1963. I hope that this agreement can serve all stakeholders in fulfilling their wishes and aspirations for mutual prosperity.

Honourable Members,

16. I am disheartened upon learning that due to the fiscal deficits incurred since 1998, the Government today is bearing an increasingly

large debt burden. Is this the kind of financial burden that we wish our future generations to inherit?

17. Such a weak financial position makes it difficult for the Government to implement new development projects or provide financial incentives to stimulate economic growth. Therefore, I support the Government's initiatives in undertaking drastic savings measures and in implementing targeted subsidies.

18. Meanwhile, new policies are constantly needed to complement those already in place to achieve a more comprehensive national approach. Among the new policies introduced is the Public Finance and Fiscal Responsibility Act 2023 which is a fiscal reform initiative for improving governance, accountability and transparency in public financial management.

19. I personally will closely monitor the Government's spending towards ensuring that all expenditure proposals will be channelled to meet real needs. I hope that during my reign the Government will succeed in achieving a fiscal surplus every year.

Honourable Members,

20. Malaysia's economy grew by 3.7% in 2023 and remains sustainable despite moderate performance in the world economy and international trade. The national unemployment rate stood at 3.3% while inflation remained at 2.5% in 2023.

21. Total investments approved in 2023 reached RM329.5 billion, creating more than 127,000 job opportunities in the same period. In terms of international trade, the country's exports in 2023 stood at RM1.426 trillion.

22. The country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2024 is projected to be between 4% and 5% due to the measures and reforms announced during Budget 2024.

23. As a medium-term measure, the Ekonomi MADANI: Memperkasa Rakyat framework reflects the Government's commitment to stimulate and restructure economic activities and investments. Several key documents have been introduced in line with this aspiration, namely the National Energy Transition Roadmap, the New Industrial Master Plan 2030, the Mid-Term Review of the Twelfth Malaysia Plan and the Budget 2024 to raise the people's living standards and prosperity based on the principles of universal justice.

24. I very much anticipate the Government adopting a proactive approach in implementing the reform agenda to strengthen the country's competitiveness towards attaining a sustainable economy in line with current needs.

25. The Government also needs to provide attractive incentives and facilitate transactions through efficient governance. Policies made at the Federal level should also be adapted to local situations due to the varied situations of individual states, especially on issues relating to the property development sector.

Honourable Members,

26. The improvements made to the higher education system in the country has successfully produced a significant number of high-quality graduates. However, the job opportunities currently available to them do not match with their qualifications.

27. Accordingly, it is imperative that the Government attracts high-value investments to create job opportunities with commensurable incomes.

28. On this occasion, I call on all parties to leverage on Visit Malaysia Year 2026. Malaysia's chairmanship of ASEAN in 2025 will open up economic opportunities to generate new income sources as well as promote the nation's culture and heritage to tourists visiting this country.

Honourable Members,

29. Efforts to increase food production should be implemented in a more systematic manner to ensure that the nation's food security level meets its target. At the same time, various programmes to ease the burden of farmers, livestock farmers, fishermen and food producers need to be enhanced towards ensuring high levels of production and incomes.

30. Due to the increasing cost of imports, I call on the Government to intensify efforts and encourage the domestic production of goods, especially of daily food supplies and raw materials.

31. I welcome Malaysia's 29th ranking in the World Competitiveness Index 2023 in the aspect of Government efficiency. I encourage these ongoing efforts to raise the people's confidence in the effectiveness of services provide by the public agencies.

32. The government machinery must also improve its efficiency and the integrity of work ethics to achieve successful economic development. I dislike systems which involve excessive red tape. Therefore, the efficiency of work processes and governance must be constantly evaluated and improved.

33. I sincerely hope that enforcement agencies will be more expeditious and efficient in their investigations to ensure prompt resolutions of cases.

Honourable Members,

34. Malaysia's stance in supporting peace and combatting terrorism should be more conspicuous at the international level. At the same time, Malaysia's active role at both the ASEAN and international levels should be sustained to foster a spirit of unity and spur progress while considering the geopolitical challenges and regional developments. Malaysia needs to take a firm position on the Palestinian issue by calling for an immediate ceasefire and to accelerate humanitarian aid access to the people of Gaza in Palestine.

35. On this occasion, I would like to express my appreciation for the loyalty shown to Me and our beloved country by members of the Public Service, the Malaysian Armed Forces, the Royal Malaysia Police and all

government agencies who have tirelessly served with the utmost dedication.

36. I also thank the people for maintaining a harmonious unity, living cohesively, and holding firmly to the principles of the Rukun Negara.

37. Finally, let us all work together and pray that Malaysia remains progressive and prosperous, peaceful, and secure and that the people will be blessed with a fulfilling, happy and prosperous life.

Sekian,

Wabillahi Taufik Wal Hidayah,

Wassamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakaatuh.