



KEYNOTE ADDRESS

**YAB DATO' SERI ANWAR BIN IBRAHIM
PRIME MINISTER OF MALAYSIA**

FOR

ASEAN AI MALAYSIA SUMMIT 2025

**12th AUGUST 2025 (TUESDAY) | 3:00 PM
MITEC, KUALA LUMPUR**

Assalammualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh, Salam Sejahtera.

Yang Berhormat Tuan Gobind Singh Deo,
Menteri Digital;

Rakan-rakan Menteri yang hadir;

YAB Dato' Seri Amirudin bin Shari,
Menteri Besar Selangor;

HE Dr. Kao Kim Hourn,

Setiausaha Agung ASEAN,

Thank you for the wonderful reception you gave me in Jakarta and Asian Secretariat;

YBhg. Tan Sri Dato' Sri Haji Shamsul Azri bin Abu Bakar,
Ketua Setiausaha Negara; dan

Rakan-rakan yang dimulikan.

1. Hari ini ternyata usaha kita dalam kerangka Ekonomi MADANI melaksanakan transformasi digital dan dengan pembentukan Kementerian Digital berhasil memberikan pengarahannya yang jelas bagi negara. Jika negara ini, Malaysia bersama rakan-rakan ASEAN mahu diangkat

sebagai kekuatan baru, Malaysia dan rakyatnya, teknokratnya, pakar teknologinya mesti mampu dan berupaya meneroka alam disiplin dan pemikiran baru.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

2. I welcome you to this inaugural ASEAN AI Malaysia Summit 2025.
3. Indeed, a historic gathering that speaks not only to the promise of technology, but the power of unity and purpose in Southeast Asia.
4. Of course, we are proud to host this. But let me digress a little. Two days back, I was in Kelantan, and I decided to focus this activity on the religious institutions, traditional religious institutions. Of course, I commend them initially for becoming the bastion in the battle against colonialism in all its forms, because colonization does not affect only the political system, but the entire value system in the country. The incessant propaganda through the mind and the hearts has led to the complete submission to the colonial powers.
5. Now, that's phase has passed. So, I told these religious scholars, this generation, and I believe the future generation, "We remain eternally grateful for you, because

you stood firm to defend the faith and moral values. You stood firm, rejecting the imposition by a foreign, alien system. But then, here's the catch — let's see, what about now? The present challenges, the contemporary challenges, demand that we make the adjustments.”

6. I told them all these gurus and religious scholars. “I'm not here to change or dictate the curriculum, but I'm here to appeal to you, while retaining this faith and moral values, of course based on Islamic traditional texts. We are now confronting a different form of challenge. That if you do not address, will cause a divide within those who acquire knowledge and those who remain completely ignorant of the new disciplines, and would be rendered completely incapable of mounting this effective challenge to uplift the standards of living of our people, and withdeem to be relevant. You see, that's the challenge.”

7. Why I'm sharing this story is when we talk about connectivity, digital divide, this is the stark reality you are facing. How do we then win the hearts and minds of all segments of our people? Those of us who have been fortunate to be exposed to these new disciplines and technology, and those of us and our family members in the rural heartland who are completely cut off, would of course read into what we term as the digital divide, or other than

digital divide, of course then, the gross disparity not only between the rich and poorer countries, the industrialized and emerging economies, but within countries, societies.

8. And I was pleased, extremely excited in that visit, because the traditional religious scholars, who probably for the first time had to listen to this elementary view about narrative, about AI and digitalization, were somewhat very accommodative, very supportive. As long as you don't disrupt our tradition, our education, our faith and moral values, I said precisely, it's not disrupting, it's defending because otherwise you will be just submitting to the forces that is beyond your control. So, this is the challenge, Minister Gobind, that is why he is placed there and you see him the way he articulates convincingly with full of passion. Now, my friend, that's the real challenge.
9. Now, which means that our deliberations in this conference. Of course, we see it at a defining crossroads, of course, because our choices mean, I see our choices, which means precisely the choice of our people, the urban and the rural and the rural heartland, the rich and the poor, the urban poor and the marginalized groups. We have to ensure that our choices will shape not only our economic future but also our cultural identity, public trust and moral leadership for generations to come.

10. So, I'm of course doubly pleased to hear the pronouncements and to Gobind is more practical to get the industries, the experts themselves to come and see and this is what we are doing or intend to do. Other than for example, Ministers giving these pronouncements the people tend to be a bit cynical unless you show seriousness and affect the change.
11. Now for ASEAN, this is a generational opportunity. Almost 700 million citizens, rapidly growing digital economy and an extraordinary diversity of cultures and languages. Our region is uniquely placed to shape AI in ways the inclusive, ethical and truth our shared values. If we approach this moment with foresight and courage, AI can bridge development divides, empower small businesses, uplift rural communities, strengthen public services and expand access to health care, education and more pronounced justice for all.
12. Now, we have therefore to be very bold and principled. Our vision is not only to harness AI just to catch up with the rest of the world but to lead in some areas, to protect our values, to give meaning to the principle of equity and justice.

13. So in doing so, insya-Allah, God willing, we will ensure that the true measure of AI success is not just the sophistication of its technology. My word coming from my generation is really complex and sophisticated and worse having this Digital Ministry coming out all these ridiculous terms sounds Greek to me and forcing me to understand and grasp such an ordeal.
14. So, I'm not sure whether I regret it or not having this Digital Ministry. But clearly as you have seen, we have made a very bold decision and I'm proud to say that we are ahead and forging ahead with such confidence in terms of digitalization and AI and we want to share this and work together with our neighbour's in Southeast Asia in the ASEAN Community Framework.
15. Minister Gobind Singh alluded to the launch of the 30th Malaysia Plan our bold blueprint for the next 5 years. Again, let me reiterate at the heart is one conviction digital transformation must drive sustainable and inclusive growth.
16. Now, the centre of this transformation is our ambition to be an AI nation and not as a tool for a few, but a force for all powering better governance which is the major challenge for most economies not only emerging economies but even the so-called developed world.

17. Better governance, sparking innovation, and improving lives through our AI Nation framework we'll ensure that AI works for every Malaysian in every corner of the country. That is why I began by making reference to this very traditional religious institution, which is not small we have hundreds and thousands of students choosing or opting for that and if we leave them, then the divide will become real and the challenges for the country would be serious. It is therefore pertinent that the elites and the technocrats have to grasp this and start dealing with it as a priority.
18. Now, back to our framework, which stands on five strong pillars:
1. Forward-looking policies
 2. Agile and digitally fluent workforce
 3. Secure and reliable digital infrastructure
 4. Advancement of digital trust; and
 5. Strategic investments that grow a thriving AI ecosystem through public-private partnerships and global collaboration.
19. These are pillars of the MADANI economy, making AI advancement inclusive, trusted, and built for purpose which means again, the Digital Ministry must be able to coordinate

well with all forces because and this is where again the whole approach to governance has to adjust the dictates of the time no longer working in silos or in traditional ministry functions, we must work as a team, collaborate and ensure that we succeed.

20. Now, highways and ports must be powered. Intelligent highways now replacing just highways and secure data pipelines and future-ready talents, which is another challenge that is why the Minister of Higher Education is here, otherwise, there's no great leap from adoption to nationhood.

21. Now, as we gather today with unity, resolve, and unshakable will, I believe that the ASEAN Community will continue to pursue this agenda. I am very fortunate because I have a formidable team not only in Malaysia but such strong bonds of friendship with ASEAN leaders, Secretary-General Kao would testify to that which makes it easy to prove a basic point that would determine our own survival that ASEAN must remain the most peaceful region in the world and must remain to be attractive and vibrant economy to ensure this meaningful digital transformation.

Terima Kasih. Thank you.