



OPENING ADDRESS BY

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

AT

**THE LAUNCHING OF AN EXHIBITION ON THE LEGACY OF
TIPU SULTAN AND HAIDER ALI OF MYSORE**

**5 AUGUST 2025 (TUESDAY) | 8.00 PM
MUZIUM KESENIAN ISLAM KUALA LUMPUR**

Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh dan salam sejahtera.

Alhamdulillah, Nahmaduhu Wa Nusolli Ala Rasulihil Karim

Yang Berbahagia Tan Sri Datuk Syed Mokhtar Albukhary;

Yang Berbahagia Puan Sri Datin Sharifah Zarah binti Syed Kecik Albukhary;

Yang Berusaha Tuan Syed Mohamad Albukhary yang mengendalikan dan menguruskan pameran ini;

Tuan-tuan yang terutama;

Tetamu kita termasuk Akbar Khan, sahabat saya dan juga pernah melahirkan dokumentari The Sword of Tipu Sultan, yang menyebabkan saya minta Syed Mohamad mengundang dia juga ke mari.

1. Rakan-rakan saya muliakan, ada keistimewaan pameran ini. Sekitar 5 hingga 6 tahun dahulu, sebelum saya menjawat jawatan, saya lihat beberapa artifak di muzium ini. Saya terpegun kerana ada satu artifak dari Tipu Sultan. Saya tak salahkan Tan Sri Syed Mokhtar kerana dia banyak

fokus tentang perniagaan besar dan kerja-kerja dalam bidang konglomerat dia. Tapi saya terangkan ini Tipu Sultan, jasa dia besar dan saya kagum dengan sedikit pengetahuan tentang Tipu Sultan.

2. Saya ke Mysore khusus kerana hendak melihat sumbangan beliau dan istana dan beberapa pameran di sana yang agak sangat terbatas, dan kerana pengalaman Tipu Sultan lah yang menyebabkan saya memilih untuk melihat juga salah satu kuil Hindu yang ulungnya, yang lama di Guruvayur, kerana dalam sejarah, Tipu Sultan ini, Mysore adalah satu-satunya pemimpin Islam yang mengambil perhatian dan menziarah kuil Hindu yang terkemuka yang dianggap sekitar 2000 tahun, iaitu Guruvayur untuk menjaga dan menyantuni rakyat beliau yang majoriti masih beragama Hindu.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

3. I was recounting my personal experience with the history of Tipu Sultan. I don't claim the mastery of the subject, but certainly I am a student of history. I, of course, enchanted by the great statesman, anti-colonial fighter Tipu Sultan. And when I was here many years ago, long before I assumed office, I was with Tan Sri Syed Mokhtar and then

I was attracted to this piece on Tipu Sultan. I said, “Syed, this great guy, this is something not known outside India”. Very little is known, but I think it is a remarkable feat.

4. A strong leader of the Mysore Sultanate led a very simple life. You visit his palace, for example it's probably one of the most, or the smallest palaces I have seen in my life. And in fact, I was a bit curious to know whether it is actually his palace. But that simplicity helps us to understand the man who was leading a nation, who wouldn't tolerate a colonial rule, who had this strength an indefatigable fighter for freedom and a learner Sultan, you can see from his collection of books, and therefore, one of the few who understood the need to have mastery of technology in order to be able to fight the colonial rule. That's why you see his cannons and his guns and some remarkable feat that shocked the colonial rulers in the first wars.
5. Now, so what relevance has it to be here in Malaysia? I think we are fortunate. So, thank you very much Mohamad. It is not just other than ordinary exhibition but to showcase the history of India and the Muslim world and history of the anti-colonial struggle against colonial rule, in this particular case, the British rule. His diplomatic skills with the feuds, sultanates, Muslims and Hindus in India and his venture

into the international diplomacy particularly in persuading the French forces to support his struggle against the British.

6. Now, Malaysia never knew much about the Sultan or his father, Haider Ali. But hopefully this will change, now that the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia is mounting the most comprehensive exhibition ever held anywhere as a tribute to the hero and his father. So, thank you again. And we have brought with us some outstanding scholars, curators, and of course, director and producer Akbar Khan, who has certainly a better and profound understanding of this man.
7. You know, history is not necessarily very kind. In the last session we had here, I was talking about the reconstruction of Malaysian history, how one of our scholars, Syed Hussein Alatas, emphasize the need to reconstruct history because history cannot be written only by the winners or from the perspective of the colonial rulers. Malaysian history as other histories also written from the perspective of the British, essentially western colonial rule. And of course, there has been lots of academic accounts, including by Edward Said on orientalism. But the manner, the whole discipline of history and the culture and society is being dictated by certain Western viewpoint. And in the reconstruction of history, it's also an attempt to understand that modernity in the Malay world is not necessarily after

British colonial rule. Similarly, if you understand Indian history, you can see the vast contribution of the great rulers in India who has promoted scholarship, learning, tolerance.

8. I made reference just now when I visited Mysore about a decade ago and then of course, surprised by the small size of the Palace of The Sultan of Mysore. And then of course, knew about the fact that he was one of the first Muslim rulers that engaged with the Hindu majority and decided to visit Guruvayur, one of the most, you could say one of the oldest Hindu temples in India and pay respects to the Hindu Swamijis and priests. And because of that, I decided from the Palace of Mysore to visit the Guruvayur Temple, and to understand that, you know, this is not ordinary because it only takes leaders with such wisdom and the tolerance to engage with his subjects. So, we talked about governance, we talked about tolerance, we talked about scholarship, because there was a vast library that he had. And we talk, of course, a bit about technology because the guns that Tuan Syed Mohamad Albukhary referred to, and the cannons, outstanding.
9. If you read history, then you realize this is something that came as a shock to the British colonial rule. Then the details will be in Akbar Khan's account in the documentary. Probably we should suggest that Malaysian television

should take it up and get the translation done with your permission. Not too much feast okay, because it is more historical education.

10. So, the artefacts that tell the sultanate's story most eloquently were once thought to be lost. Some of them are now in Malaysia permanently, thanks to the Islamic Arts Museum. So, we want to talk about Tipu Sultan, it is here in the Islamic Arts Museum. I salute to Tuan Syed Mohamad Albukhary.

11. When I was in London on an official visit, I had just one hour, Tuan Syed Mohamad Albukhary said just one hour to the Islamic Art Division at the British Museum that he was entrusted to probably exhibit some of the most profound artefacts. And of course, I had to spend two and half hours to see the attraction and the passion. He insisted that I try and understand every single artefact there. And I said to Tuan Syed Mohamad Albukhary, I am on the official visit, I had certain, limited time but thank you very much. I hope Malaysians take that opportunity because it is not found in many places, in other places, at least to understand Indian history, Muslim history, history of scholarship and technology and tolerance in the figure of Tipu Sultan.

12. Now, at this exhibition, I have been told that there are many references to Tipu Sultan's belief that it is again very famous saying. In fact, I have used that in some of my earlier campaigns, “better to live a day as a tiger than a hundred years as a sheep.” That was a *Reformasi* motto also. I am glad it is a tiger that preoccupied the Tipu Sultan. There are very few places left where this majestic cat still lives. We are promoting that, as you know in the 12th Malaysia Plan, we made special reference to the Malayan tiger, to save it.

13. The entertainment mogul Akbar Khan’s production of “The Sword of Tipu Sultan” was a massive hit on the subcontinent, and he will be participating in some series of talks, tomorrow.

14. So, I thank you again, Tuan Syed Mohamad Albukhary and Tan Sri Datuk Syed Mokhtar Albukhary and the friends here, and wish you well.

Terima Kasih,

Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakutuh.