

Acceptance Speech by

**YAB DATUK AMAR HAJI FADILLAH BIN HAJI YUSOF
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND
MINISTER OF ENERGY TRANSITION AND WATER
TRANSFORMATION**

**THE INNS OF COURT MALAYSIA
10TH ANNIVERSARY GALA DINNER
In Conjunction with The Benching Ceremony**

27th June 2026 (Saturday)

8:00 PM

The Majestic Hotel, Kuala Lumpur

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim.

**Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh,
Salam Sejahtera dan Salam Malaysia MADANI.**

(SALUTATIONS)

**HIS EXCELLENCY TUN PEHIN SRI DR. HAJI WAN JUNAIDI BIN
TUANKU JAAFAR,
GOVERNOR OF SARAWAK;**

**HER MOST GRACIOUS TOH PUAN DATUK PATINGGI
FAUZIAH BINTI MOHD SANUSI;**

**YANG AMAT ARIF TUN WAN AHMAD FARID BIN WAN
SALLEH,
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE CHIEF JUSTICE OF MALAYSIA;**

**YANG AMAT BERBAHAGIA TUN ZAKI TUN AZMI,
12TH CHIEF JUSTICE OF MALAYSIA;**

**YANG AMAT BERBAHAGIA TUN ARIFIN BIN ZAKARIA,
13TH CHIEF JUSTICE OF MALAYSIA AND PRESIDENT OF THE
INNS OF COURT MALAYSIA;**

**YANG AMAT BERBAHAGIA TOH PUAN ROBIAH BINTI ABDUL
KADIR;**

**YANG AMAT BERBAHAGIA TUN MD RAUS BIN SHARIF,
14TH CHIEF JUSTICE OF MALAYSIA;**

**YANG AMAT BERBAHAGIA TUN TENGKU MAIMUN BINTI
TUAN MAT,
16TH CHIEF JUSTICE OF MALAYSIA;**

**YANG BERHORMAT DATO' SENATOR AWANG BEMEE BIN
ALI BASAH,
PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE;**

**YANG BERHORMAT DATO' SRI AZALINA OTHMAN SAID,
MINISTER IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT (LAW
AND INSTITUTIONAL REFORM);**

**YANG BERHORMAT PUAN HANNAH YEOH TSEOW SUAN,
MINISTER IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT
(FEDERAL TERRITORIES);**

**THE RIGHT HONOURABLE DATUK SERI ABU BAKAR BIN
JAIS,
PRESIDENT OF THE COURT OF APPEAL;**

**THE RIGHT HONOURABLE DATUK HAJJAH AZIZAH BINTI
HAJI NAWAWI,
CHIEF JUDGE OF SABAH AND SARAWAK;**

**YANG DIHORMATI COMMISSIONER DATUK MOHAMAD
ZAINAL ABDULLAH,
SARAWAK COMMISSIONER OF POLICE;**

**YANG BERBAHAGIA DATO' BRENDON KEITH SOH,
SABAH STATE ATTORNEY-GENERAL;**

**HIS EXCELLENCY NORIYUKI SHIKATA,
THE AMBASSADOR OF JAPAN**

**HER EXCELLENCY MARTA LAURA GABRIELONI,
THE AMBASSADOR OF THE ARGENTINE REPUBLIC**

**HER EXCELLENCY JODI ROBINSON,
THE HIGH COMMISSIONER OF CANADA**

**UNITED STATES CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES,
DAVID H. GAMBLE**

**INDIA CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES,
HITESH RAJPAL**

**MINISTER COUNSELLOR AT THE EMBASSY OF THE
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA,
MR LIN SHIGUANG**

**HONOURABLE JUDGES OF THE FEDERAL COURT,
COURT OF APPEAL AND HIGH COURT**

**MR. ANAND RAY,
PRESIDENT OF THE MALAYSIAN BAR**

**SENIOR MEMBERS OF THE BAR, LEGAL ACADEMICS,
CORPORATE COUNSEL,**

**MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA,
DISTINGUISHED GUESTS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.**

Before I begin, allow me to express my deepest gratitude to Allah SWT for His countless blessings and guidance.

There are moments in life when honours remind us not of what we have achieved, but of how much more remains to be done. They invite us to reflect not on recognition, but on responsibility.

This evening is one such moment for me.

1. First of all, allow me to extend my heartfelt **congratulations to the Inns of Court Malaysia on the occasion of its 10th Anniversary.**
2. Ten years may appear a relatively short period in the life of an institution, but what the Inns of Court Malaysia (ICM) has accomplished within a decade is truly remarkable.
3. It has grown from an inspired vision into a respected national institution dedicated to advancing legal excellence, strengthening professional ethics, fostering fellowship, and promoting the rule of law.

4. **It is therefore both fitting and deeply humbling that I have the privilege of sharing in this celebration by accepting one of the highest honours the Inns of Court Malaysia can bestow.**

5. I stand before you with a profound sense of gratitude and humility as I accept the honour of being conferred as an **Honorary Bencher of the Inns of Court Malaysia (ICM).**

6. I wish to record my sincere appreciation to the **Tun President, the Executive Committee and the entire membership of the Inns of Court Malaysia** for bestowing upon me this distinguished honour.

7. Indeed, when Tan Kee Heng first informed me of this proposal some two months ago, my immediate response was that such an honour was truly unnecessary.

8. Yet as I reflected upon it, I came to realise that this recognition is not merely an acknowledgement, but an amanah — **a trust that carries with it a greater responsibility to continue contributing towards the development of law, justice and good governance in our country.**

9. To be admitted to the Bench of an institution devoted to professional excellence, legal education, mentorship and fellowship is a privilege that I value deeply.
10. I accept this honour not merely as a personal distinction but as a commitment to support the noble values and enduring purposes for which this institution stands.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

11. On this special occasion, allow me to share a few reflections on **"The Law and the Foundation of Society"**.
12. The law is far more than a collection of statutes, regulations or judicial decisions. At its highest purpose, the law is society's collective commitment to justice, order and human dignity.
13. **It protects the rights of individuals. It provides certainty in commercial and social relationships. It establishes the framework through which disputes are**

resolved peacefully, public power is exercised responsibly, and wrongs are remedied fairly.

14. When administered with wisdom and integrity, the law creates the certainty and confidence necessary for economic growth, social stability and national progress.
15. In a diverse nation such as Malaysia, the law also serves as a common language that binds us together. **Regardless of ethnicity, religion, culture or background, it provides a shared framework through which we coexist with mutual respect, understanding and trust.**
16. Yet the strength of the law lies not merely in its existence, but in the confidence people place in it.
17. Public trust is built when laws are applied fairly, institutions function independently, and justice is seen to be done without fear or favour.
18. Achieving this requires a collective effort between the Judiciary, the legal profession and the public. When judges administer justice with independence and courage, when

lawyers serve with integrity and professionalism, and when citizens respect and understand the law, we strengthen the very foundations upon which our nation stands.

19. **Tun Abdul Razak's own legacy reminds us of this truth.** He is remembered not only for the roads, schools and settlements he built, but for the institutions he founded that endured long after him — **institutions that, at their best, command public confidence and unite society.**

Strong institutions create strong nations, and among the most important of these institutions are those entrusted with the administration of justice.

20. **This principle was echoed throughout the life and work of the late Sultan Azlan Shah,** whose contributions to constitutionalism and the rule of law continue to guide us today.

21. As His Royal Highness himself put it, **the rule of law means literally what it says — the rule of the law.** Government itself must be ruled by the law and subject to it,

not the other way around; what he described, in the phrase he often invoked, as **"government by law, and not by men."**

22. That timeless reminder remains as relevant today as it was then. The credibility of any nation is ultimately measured not by the power it wields, but by the fairness with which it exercises that power.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

23. The law has never been static. It evolves continuously in response to changes in society, technology, commerce and international relations.

24. Today, artificial intelligence, digital commerce, cybersecurity, energy transition, cross-border transactions and emerging forms of dispute resolution are reshaping the environment in which legal professionals operate.

25. Like many other professions, the legal fraternity is witnessing unprecedented technological transformation. Clients increasingly turn to artificial intelligence tools to obtain legal information before consulting their lawyers, and I am

informed that several AI-powered legal platforms are now being developed locally to assist legal drafting, research and judicial work.

26. Yet technology alone cannot deliver justice. **Algorithms may analyse information, but they cannot replace wisdom. Machines may process data, but they cannot exercise conscience. Artificial intelligence may assist decision-making, but it cannot assume moral responsibility. That responsibility remains firmly with human beings.**

27. **Our challenge, therefore, is not whether to adopt AI, but how to adopt it responsibly, ethically and wisely.** When guided by sound judgment, professional ethics and accountability, AI can improve efficiency, expand access to justice and strengthen legal services for the benefit of society.

28. Legal education must therefore continue beyond university and professional qualification. Admission to practice should never be regarded as the end of learning.

29. Rather, it marks the beginning of a lifelong journey of intellectual growth, reflection and professional development.

The most effective lawyers are not merely those who know the law, but those who continue learning long after formal education has ended.

30. In this regard, I commend the **Inns of Court Malaysia for its longstanding commitment to continuous legal education and professional development.**

31. Through lectures, seminars, conferences, advocacy training, mentoring programmes and professional dialogue, the Inns has played an important role in nurturing legal excellence over the past decade.

32. Over the last two years, I have personally witnessed some of these initiatives through Kee Heng, who has served actively within the Executive Committee and has contributed significantly towards bringing together members of the profession for educational programmes, professional engagement and knowledge-sharing.

33. Such efforts ensure that the legal profession remains competent, ethical, forward-looking and responsive to the evolving needs of society.

34. The Government will continue to welcome and support initiatives that strengthen professional knowledge, encourage intellectual discourse and enhance the quality of legal services available to the rakyat.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

35. Malaysia's continued success as a peaceful, prosperous and respected nation depends greatly upon the strength of its institutions and the confidence of its people in those institutions.

36. We must continue to uphold the separation of powers, preserve judicial independence, support legal scholarship and education, and maintain the highest standards of professional conduct. **Above all, we must remain steadfast in our commitment to the rule of law.**

37. Tonight, I am deeply honoured to join the Bench of the Inns of Court Malaysia. I accept this distinction with gratitude, humility and a sincere commitment to support the continuing work of the Inns.

38. I look forward to contributing, in whatever capacity I can, towards strengthening legal education, advancing professional excellence and promoting the enduring values of justice and integrity.

Allow me to conclude with a final reflection.

The true measure of a legal system is not found in the number of laws it produces, but in the trust it inspires. And the true measure of those who serve the law is not the positions they hold, but the difference they make in the lives of others.

Long after our titles have faded and our careers have concluded, what will endure are the institutions we strengthened, the principles we defended and the people whose lives were made better because we chose to serve with integrity.

May we therefore continue to build a legal profession that is learned in knowledge, unwavering in principle, courageous in defending justice and generous in serving society.

May we leave behind institutions stronger than we found them, and a nation more just, more united and more confident in the future than the one we inherited.

39. Once again, I thank the Tun President, the Executive Committee and all members of the Inns of Court Malaysia for this exceptional honour.

Thank you. Terima kasih.