

SPEECH OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF MALAYSIA

OPENING LEGAL YEAR 2026

May it please Your Honours,

The Rt. Honourable The Chief Justice of Malaysia

The Rt. Honourable The President of the Court of Appeal

The Rt. Honourable The Chief Judge of the High Court of Malaya

The Rt. Honourable The Chief Judge of the High Court of Sabah and Sarawak

The Honourable Chief Justices and Heads of Foreign Judiciaries

The Honourable Minister in the Prime Minister's Department

Your Excellencies

Honourable Judges of the Superior Courts and Judicial Commissioners

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Assalamualaikum warrahmatullahi wa barakatuh, a very good morning,
warm greetings and Salam Malaysia MADANI.

Introduction

YAA, YA, ladies and gentlemen,

1. Allow me to begin by expressing my utmost and sincere appreciation to the Malaysian Judiciary. I am honoured to be here this morning. My deepest appreciation to YAA Chief Justice of Malaysia for the opportunity to share my thoughts in this respected gathering. It is a privilege I do not take lightly, and I am grateful for Your Lordship's confidence and gracious invitation.
2. On this beautiful day, it is not too late for me to offer my heartfelt congratulations to:
 - (a) YAA Datuk Seri Utama Wan Ahmad Farid bin Wan Salleh on the appointment as the Chief Justice of Malaysia;

- (b) YAA Dato' Abu Bakar bin Jais on the appointment as the President Court of Appeal;
 - (c) YAA Dato' Hashim bin Hamzah on the appointment as the Chief Judge of the High Court of Malaya; and
 - (d) YAA Datuk Hajah Azizah binti Haji Nawawi on the appointment as the Chief Judge of Sabah and Sarawak.
3. We eagerly look forward to benefiting from YAAs' wisdom and guidance.

The Path Forward – Malaysia MADANI

YAA, YA, ladies and gentlemen,

4. In January 2023, the Prime Minister YAB Dato' Seri Anwar bin Ibrahim introduced the Malaysia MADANI framework. The MADANI Government has called for a paradigm shift, one that emphasises values, accountability, governance, reform, sustainability and inclusion. For Attorney General's Chambers ("AGC"), this is not merely a policy direction. It is a responsibility and a duty to the

nation. AGC remains firmly committed to advancing this vision through principled, diligent and people-centred service.

5. Last year, AGC received first place in the *Best Kampung Angkat MADANI Award* for the *Kampung Angkat* located in Kampung Jilid 8 dan Rangkaian, Mukim Bujang, Kuala Muda, Kedah at the *Majlis Simposium Pembangunan dan Anugerah Pembangunan Negara 2025* (SPAPN 2025). It was the highest recognition and an inspiring achievement reflecting the dedication of officers and the foresight of YA Tan Sri Ahmad Terrirudin bin Mohd Salleh, our former Attorney General, in spearheading community-centred initiatives.
6. As 2026 begins, we renew our commitment to the MADANI Government with clear purpose and unity.

Legal Reform: Laws Must Evolve

YAA, YA, ladies and gentlemen,

7. AGC serves as the central legal authority of the Government, exercising a comprehensive mandate in shaping, guiding and implementing legal reform initiatives. In fulfilling its constitutional and

statutory responsibilities, AGC undertakes rigorous legal analysis, conducts systematic reviews of existing legislative frameworks and oversees the drafting, vetting and harmonisation of new legislation to ensure full compliance with the Federal Constitution.

8. To meet emerging national needs and strengthen the rule of law, AGC has contributed significantly to the enactment of numerous important legislations in 2025, including—

- (a) the enactment of the **Parliamentary Service Act 2025 [Act 869]** to establish a robust governance structure for Parliamentary administration;
- (b) the **Consumer Credit Bill 2025**, to strengthen consumer protection in Malaysia's credit ecosystem;
- (c) the **Cross-Border Insolvency Bill 2025** was drafted to facilitate the recognition of foreign insolvency proceedings while protecting local creditors;
- (d) **Legal Aid and Public Defence Bill 2025**, to improve the legal aid and public defence system, and ensure that it is more inclusive;
- (e) **Gig Workers Bill 2025** provided the long-awaited legal protections for gig economy workers; and

(f) **Government Procurement Bill 2025**, which was enacted to be a major step toward transparent, accountable public resource management.

9. One of the most significant reforms undertaken is the separation of the roles of the Attorney General and the Public Prosecutor. On 10 September 2025, the Cabinet agreed to adopt a full separation model, with both offices held by different individuals of equal status. The Cabinet also endorsed the tabling of the Federal Constitution (Amendment) Bill in the 2026 Parliament session. To implement the recent Cabinet decision, AGC has reactivated the Working Committee and several sub-committees which have been set up since 2018 to refine the detailed proposals on organizational structure, staffing, logistics, financial considerations, and phased implementation strategies.

Keeping Laws Updated: Revision, Reprint and Translation Work

YAA, YA, ladies and gentlemen,

10. AGC remains committed to ensuring that all Malaysian laws stay relevant and up-to-date. In line with this commitment and in exercising the revision powers conferred by the Revision of Laws Act 1968 [Act 1], we have cumulatively revised 295 pre-1969 federal laws, reflecting our sustained efforts to safeguard and bolster the nation's legal framework. In 2025, AGC has revised a total of twelve laws, including two principal legislations. AGC has also undertaken to reprint the Federal Constitution in both English and the national language texts with the consent of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong pursuant to Article 160A of the Federal Constitution. Subsequently, we have also reprinted thirty-nine Acts and subsidiary legislation at the request of various ministries. Additionally, AGC has translated twelve pre-1967 laws into the national language, particularly, for the purposes of prescribing the text in the national language as the authoritative text under the National Language Act 1963/67 [Act 32]. These functions may seem administrative, but they strengthen the backbone of our legal system in ensuring clarity, accuracy and public access.

Protecting Our Children

YAA, YA, ladies and gentlemen,

11. As part of the MADANI Government's reform agenda, AGC has also been instrumental in advancing key child-protection statutes such as the Sexual Offences Against Children Act 2017 and the Evidence of Child Witness Act 2007, both of which significantly strengthen the protection, participation and evidentiary rights of children in the justice system.
12. To make this endeavour a reality, AGC works closely with the Legal Affairs Division, Prime Minister's Department under the visionary and decisive leadership of YB Dato' Sri Azalina binti Othman Said, our Honourable Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Law and Institutional Reform), who has played such a major role in this reform agenda in coordinating policy, prioritising legislative initiatives, and synchronising efforts across agencies. This move demonstrates the commitment of the MADANI Government towards a broader legal reform agenda. This collaboration ensures that proposed amendments and new bills proceed in alignment with national policy directions, Cabinet parameters and legislative governance processes.

13. We also work in partnership with the judicial and enforcement bodies, in supporting the strengthening of courtroom procedures involving children by providing legal input for the development of child-sensitive mechanisms. This encompasses advising on the use of intermediaries, providing separate waiting areas, establishing controlled courtroom environments and facilitating alternative modes of giving evidence. Such measures minimise trauma for child victims and witnesses, ensuring that judicial and enforcement procedures affecting children are applied consistently, sensitively and in a manner that upholds their rights and welfare.
14. Case in point, AGC plays a key role in the formulation of the Anti-Bully Bill by undertaking direct legal drafting, refining statutory definitions and ensuring consistency with related legislation such as the Penal Code, the Child Act 2001, the Criminal Procedure Code, the Sexual Offences Against Children Act 2017 and the Evidence of Child Witness Act 2007. Beyond advising on the legal implications of policy decisions, AGC prepares and drafts legislative text that articulates clear duties, responsibilities and safeguarding obligations for schools, institutions and enforcement bodies. The Anti-Bully Bill is designed to address both individual and systemic forms of bullying, including bullying that is embedded within or

supported by institutional systems, rules or culture and encompasses bullying occurring in physical, digital and educational institutional environments.

15. Chambers also contributes to evaluating the implementation and effectiveness of recent amendments and reforms relating to child protection and anti-bullying. This includes identifying enforcement gaps, recommending legislative or policy improvements and ensuring that Malaysia's legal framework remains responsive to contemporary challenges while adhering to international best practices in child protection.
16. AGC also collaborated with the National Legal Academy to design and deliver specialised training modules on child-protection laws, child-sensitive procedures and trauma-informed approaches. This collaboration helps ensure that legal officers and relevant professionals are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to handle child-related cases with the utmost care and sensitivity.
17. By leading legal drafting, constitutional assessment, prosecutorial guidelines and coordination across agencies, AGC plays an essential role in driving child protection and anti-bullying reforms

that are legally sound, aligned with national policies and consistent with Malaysia's overall priorities. We shall strive to ensure that the legal system adapts effectively to evolving societal demands and modern challenges, thereby enhancing institutional transparency, strengthening accountability, protecting vulnerable communities and upholding the rule of law.

Malaysia on the International Stage: Defending Principles of Justice

YAA, YA, ladies and gentlemen,

18. AGC plays a vital role in representing Malaysia on the international stage, safeguarding our national interests while upholding the principles of justice, fairness and the rule of law. Certain contributions and efforts to promote and strengthen justice and the law are stated forthwith.
19. In April 2025, the AGC team, led by Dato' Seri Solicitor General II, participated in the International Court of Justice (ICJ) hearings on Israel's obligations relating to the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Malaysia reaffirmed its long-standing position on the Palestinian

right to self-determination and highlighted Israel's breaches of international law.

20. The Joint Statement by ASEAN Law Ministers on the Development of International Commercial Arbitration and Mediation ("Joint Statement") have been adopted at the ASEAN Law Forum ("ALF 2025"), which was held in August 2025. The Joint Statement aims to further strengthen regional commitment to legal reform, the establishment of shared standards and enhanced cooperation, reflecting ASEAN's collective vision to reinforce the foundations of the rule of law to support economic resilience and regional unity. In this regard, AGC was involved directly in preparing the Joint Statement.

21. Chambers officers also participated in the 24th ASEAN Senior Law Officials Meeting and the 13th ASEAN Law Ministers Meeting in Manila, in November 2025, where Malaysia signed the ASEAN Treaty on Extradition, a milestone after more than twenty years of negotiation.

22. Apart from that, Malaysia also hosted the 47th ASEAN Summit in October 2025, during which Timor-Leste's admission into ASEAN

was formalised through two documents, namely the Declaration on the Admission of Timor-Leste to ASEAN and the Instrument of Accession of Timor-Leste to the ASEAN Charter. AGC was involved to ensure that both documents were in order before this historic event was finalised at the recent 47th ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur.

Driving Malaysia's Economic Competitiveness Through Trade Law

YAA, YA, ladies and gentlemen,

23. In today's global economy, trade agreements are no longer just economic documents — they are legal frameworks that determine investment flows, employment opportunities and long-term national competitiveness. In 2025 alone, AGC participated in eighteen free trade agreement negotiations, contributing legal expertise to ensure Malaysia's rights and obligations are clearly safeguarded. Four major agreements were successfully concluded—

(a) the Malaysia–Korea Free Trade Agreement;

- (b) the Malaysia–EFTA¹ Economic Partnership Agreement;
- (c) the Malaysia–United Arab Emirates Comprehensive Economics Partnership Agreement; and
- (d) the ASEAN–China Free Trade Area 3.0.

24. In line with the National Energy Transition Roadmap, Malaysia is advancing its commitments under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Paris Agreement and the Kyoto Protocol, particularly through legal frameworks supporting carbon capture and clean energy.

25. Towards this end, Malaysia has enacted the Carbon Capture, Utilization and Storage Act 2025 [Act 870], and the Carbon Capture, Utilization and Storage (Offshore Permit and Licensing) Regulations 2025. AGC officers have given full commitment in realizing the first comprehensive national legal framework for the entire CCUS value chain in the Southeast Asian region, positioning Malaysia as a potential regional carbon management hub.

¹ EFTA – European Free Trade Association

Conclusion: The Way Forward

YAA, YA, ladies and gentlemen,

26. In line with the MADANI paradigm shift, AGC will continue to evolve and improve the laws, to strengthen governance and to serve Malaysia with dignity and excellence.
27. As we open the legal year of 2026, let us reaffirm our pledge to uphold justice not as a privilege, but as a right for every Malaysian. The strength of a nation lies not only in the laws it enacts, but in its courage to enforce them fairly and without fear or favour. Allow me to share a brief pantun to reinforce this call:

Banyak sungguh bunga melati,

Bawa mari ke dalam pekan,

Hidup kita lawan mati,

Mana jahat kita tinggalkan.²

28. To conclude, as guardians of the rule of law, we bear the responsibility to ensure that justice is accessible, impartial and effective. With dedication and unity, we can build a justice system

² Kurik Kundi Merah Saga, terbitan Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Edisi Kedua, ms 466.

that truly serves the people fairly, transparently and without compromise.

29. I would like to recite from the Al Quran, Surah An-Nisa', verse 135, which reminds us:

“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both. So, follow not [personal] inclination, lest you not be just. And if you distort [your testimony] or refuse [to give it], then indeed Allah is ever, of what you do, Aware.”

(An-Nisa': 135)

30. With that, I would like to record my gratitude, and I wish everyone a meaningful and rewarding year ahead.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF MALAYSIA

JANUARY 2026