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Inculcate youths with correct values

Cheah Kian Thong

IN his Hari Raya speech, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad touched on some very sensitive issues, based on ethnic backgrounds. This is very commendable and indeed shows our progress as a nation since Merdeka.

Dr Mahathir has shown us that we need to face the issues at hand, and not shirk from responsibilities.

However, I would like to add that these social ills spread across all levels of our society regardless of ethnicity. We have progressed far as a young nation of 40 years. We have made tremendous advancement in our way of life, communications, infrastructure, travel, business etc. We have in fact built up a lot of hardware over these years.

However, I would like to submit that a major cause of society's ills are in the mentality and upbringing of our youths. In our haste to progress and "catch up" with the industrialised world, we may have forgotten to nurture the mind, the software of our society. These include civic consciousness, graciousness, kindness, care, compassion etc.

One cannot function properly without the other. We need both hardware and software for a nation to be efficient and effective. And youths being the future generation need to be inculcated with the right values of the Rukunegara.

It has been suggested recently that we consider national service, social service for our youths. I suggest that all schoolchildren take part in at least one uniformed group. These will help instil discipline and civic consciousness. Perhaps we could also make it mandatory to have a certain number of hours of social or public service performed during their secondary school years before being granted entry to our universities and colleges. That will certainly keep our youths off the streets.

Cheah Kian Thong

Ipoh.

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