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The tenth challenge

Janson Premraja

THE article on Vision 2020 (MB, March 16 issue) asks us to take stock of all our past achievements and note how close we are towards the realisation of Vision 2020.

However, our present affluence is being tested by a decline in social and moral values under the impact of intellectual freedom caused by new knowledge and the rapid advancement of technology. Along with this trend, an economy that has enjoyed a vibrant growth all these years may run the risk of overheating, as the writer points out, and the results could be akin to what a few industrialised Western countries experienced not long ago.

In this context, the nine challenges we have to face if Vision 2020 is to materialise, as explained comprehensively by the writer, are well worth taking up as everybody's business while our leaders are instituting measures to provide the scope for hard work and united action towards meeting these challenges.

Noteworthy of them are the need to establish a united Bangsa Malaysia with a common shared identity, the need for fostering and developing a community-oriented Malaysian democracy and the need to establish a fully moral and ethical society founded on strong spiritual and religious values.

However, what actually would spur us to face these challenges with courage and determination is the fact that past national disasters, such as the Highland Towers tragedy in 1993 which took away 48 lives, the Greg tropical storm last year - the worst of our misfortunes - which killed 238 people with another 102 still missing, and more recently the loss of an illustrious son of our industrial sector, the late Tan Sri Datuk Yahaya Ahmad, under shocking circumstances have not produced a single hiccup in the process of implementing programmes on the national agenda.

On the other hand, so many of our national projects such as the construction of both the 88-storey Petronas Towers - the world's tallest - and the Menara Kuala Lumpur, which is changing the capital's skyline, went ahead without any interruption.

A few others going on schedule are the 1998 Commonwealth Games for which massive preparations are underway, the opening of the RM3.6 billion Kuala Lumpur International Airport next year and the setting up of the RM20 billion Multimedia Super Corridor, a high-tech venture which has already attracted an encouraging international clientele.

The revelation here is that all our leaders, with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the helm, have learnt and mastered the secret of self-renewal. They use it in times of roadblocks and bounce back into action, even more enthusiastically, to continue their journey towards 2020.

From this standpoint, may I outline the tenth challenge: 'To establish a society which places implicit faith and trust in its leaders, in order to enable them to increase their capacity to give their best to society.'

Janson Premraja

Petaling Jaya

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