

26/10/1998

Sacrifices, unity, discipline needed to overcome problems

Lee Lam Thye

MALAYSIANS of Indian origin celebrated Deepavali for the second time in the midst of our economic crisis.

In this connection although there are signs of recovery and some improvements arising from exchange rate controls and other measures, much more needs to be done.

The successful implementation of the National Economic Recovery Plan and its six core objectives is also vital.

During difficult economic times, it is obvious that sacrifices, unity and discipline are needed to overcome economic problems.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohammad in his Deepavali message has said that unity and discipline among the different races had helped Malaysia weather the problems caused by the ringgit's depreciation and drop in the value of the stock market.

The call for sacrifice requires us to put a stop to all forms of extravagance and wastage and the people must spend prudently.

The significance of festive celebrations in our multi-racial and multi-religious nation lies in instilling the spirit of unity among Malaysians of diverse races, cultures and religions.

Malaysians must understand that while their spirit of tolerance and understanding has been recognised as a major factor in the nation's stability, they must continually take steps to reinforce that spirit.

Equally important is the patriotic spirit of Malaysians which can be expressed in many forms such as supporting the made-in-Malaysia campaign.

Patriotic Malaysians should not dishonour their country overseas but should resort to appropriate channels to express their dissent, if any.

The Parliament is an appropriate forum to discuss issues and problems affecting our nation.

There is also the general election where once in five years the people elect their representatives to Parliament.

The wishes of the people can therefore be expressed through the ballot box. There is no necessity to take issues and problems to the streets.

We do not need disturbances and chaos or, for that matter, international condemnation and trade sanctions.

It is imperative that Malaysians of all races work for racial and religious harmony, and enhance efforts to promote understanding and unity which is vital for our economic recovery and nation-building.

Another important aspect of handling the present economic crisis and related problems is crisis management.

It is only appropriate to enhance the ability of senior government officers to handle crises by focusing on problem solving.

In difficult economic times, many problems are likely to surface and it is imperative that all government officers be on the alert and take appropriate and fast preventive action.

Problems like the water shortage experienced by the Klang Valley residents, situations like the haze, open burning, illegal immigrant problems and street protests or demonstrations need to be handled and resolved speedily.

Therefore training officers to handle crisis situations should be regarded as a priority as we brace ourselves to face the many challenges that lie ahead.

(END)

