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Spirit of patriotism must be kindled in every heart

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THE spirit of patriotism must be kindled in the hearts of Malaysians. Our first response must be to defend the country from all forms of undermining within as well as without.

The sense of responsibility and love for the nation must always be in the hearts and minds of our younger generation.

It must be utmost in the spirit of the people, especially in times of economic turmoil to protect the nation against the tide of adversity.

The theme of this year's National Day celebration is "Our Nation Our Responsibility". In this context, our accountability and responsibility should be geared towards building a united and strong nation.

To achieve this task, our beloved Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is leading the nation towards the road to harmony and peace.

We must continue to maintain the solidarity, unity and stability in the country which the Government has built up over the years.

In an era of globalisation, our country is being recognised as the most progressive among the developing countries.

Today, Malaysians can take pride in achievements such as the production of the national car, Proton; the Multimedia Super Corridor via Cyberjaya and the hosting of the 16th Commonwealth Games.

The people of Malaysia must be commended. For their untiring efforts, not bowing to external forces and instead safeguarding the country's sovereignty and independence by uniting with one accord and one spirit.

We must build a progressive nation with a vision for the new millennium. The current economic turmoil is a good lesson for us. We must make sacrifices such as giving priority to our own goods.

The "Buy Malaysian" campaign will boost the domestic economy and save on foreign exchange. Travelling within the country and educating our children locally means a lot.

Dr Mahathir has urged all patriotic Malaysians to use whatever 'realistic methods' to raise funds for the nation. This includes pawning jewellery outside the country and depositing the money received from the transaction in local banks.

Corporate figures can also play a vital role by bringing back foreign investments and doing business in Malaysia.

In a multi-religious society, we shouldn't fall prey to evil acts but should instead ensure that religious harmony continues to prevail.

Another area in which we can show our love for the nation is to respect our national anthem and hoist the 'Jalur Gemilang' always.

Civic-consciousness is the essence of a patriotic citizen. Knowledge of the Government and its institutions, civic responsibilities, social justice, tolerance of others are essential values which constitute the basis of an effective democracy, thus paving the way for solidarity and harmony.

In addition to this, 'civic cultures' depicting the major races must be absorbed and practised to give a true Malaysian image.

Our dream of hosting the Games has been realised. In the spirit of 'Malaysia Boleh' every Malaysian must contribute towards making the Games a success by purchasing tickets as a show of patriotism.

The Malaysian contingent must uphold the image of the country and stay focused on winning medals for the country, putting our beloved motherland on the world map.

As parents, we must nurture in our children love for the country. We must make every effort to uphold the national interest and put aside self interest.

Malaysian society must be honest and sophisticated in its thinking and uphold the principle of one voice and one language (Bahasa Malaysia) as the bottom line of patriotism.