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`Strive, sacrifice to get nation out of recession'

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - Malaysians must be prepared to work harder and make bigger sacrifices to pull the country out of the recession, MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said today.

He said they must not lose hope in facing the challenges, the toughest since the country gained independence 41 years ago, and they must be confident that they can do it within a shorter period than anticipated.

"Our country went through a recession once in mid-80s.

"With the co-operation and untiring efforts by both the Government and the people, we not only beat the recession but also emerged stronger economically," he said in his message to mark the country's 41st National Day celebrations tomorrow.

Dr Ling, who is also Transport Minister, also called on Malaysians to give solid support to the Government and the leadership of Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad as Prime Minister in efforts to rehabilitate the economy.

In Kuala Lumpur, social welfare advocate Datuk Lee Lam Thye said today the economic difficulties confronting Malaysians drives home the need for them to continue building a united nation with a sense of common and shared destiny.

Lee, in a Press release, called on all Malaysians to enhance the spirit of love and loyalty for the country and contribute towards its economic recovery.

Lee, who is also a member of the National Unity Advisory Panel, said National Day was also a time for Malaysians to remember that national unity was paramount to the nation's future development and success.

Meanwhile, the DAP plans to hold a National Economic Crisis Consultative Conference on Sept 20 for Malaysians to pool their ideas on how to overcome the country's economic problems.

Its secretary-general Lim Kit Siang said the conference would be held in the spirit of the National Day theme "Our Nation, Our Responsibility".

"I will seek the co-operation of the National Economic Action Council and the Government concerning the conference.

"I hope the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister of Special Functions and NEAC members can meet with Malaysians from a cross-section of society to get a grip on the current problem," he said in his National Day address.

The Malaysian Youth Council has urged Malaysians, particularly the youths, to pledge their support and loyalty to the Government led by Dr Mahathir.

In a statement today, its president Saifuddin Abdullah said even though the youths were not involved in fighting for the country's freedom 41 years ago, they could contribute by helping the Government resolve the economic problems.

"Youths should give their commitment to help the country recover from the crisis faster."

The Malaysian Trades Union Congress today urged employers not to retrench workers but be responsible corporate citizens by protecting their workers' long-term interests.

Its president Zainal Rampak told Bernama, employers must think of re-training their workers in the latest industrial technology.

He said workers could be re-trained using government facilities and local training institutions which were on par with that of those abroad.

In Penang, Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon today called on all Malaysians to assist the Government with economic recovery while promoting and enhancing greater peace, stability and solidarity.

In his National Day message, Koh said: "The celebration of National Day gives us an opportunity to recall the great deeds of the late Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Alhaj and the country's founding fathers and fighters for independence who freed us from the yoke of colonialism.

"Since 1957, generations after generations of Malaysians had worked hard to sustain, defend and fulfil our independence.

"We have charted many achievements over the past 41 years, especially under the leadership of Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad since 1981.

"Dr Mahathir inspired Vision 2020 for building a Malaysian nation which is fully advanced in all aspects and developing a civilised society well-versed in information technology through the implementation of the Multimedia Super Corridor."

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