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Proud to be a Malaysian

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AND so it has been said by none other than the Prime Minister himself that when "the time is right" a non-Malay can be Prime Minister of Malaysia.

Indeed, we will see and hear much comments and opinions from politicians over the next few weeks. May I take this opportunity here to add my opinion.

What is more important to note from the Prime Minister's remark is not the racial problems but the creation of a truly Bangsa Malaysia.

I am proud of my origins and even more proud to be a Malaysian, born after 1957. I pride myself as someone with a Malaysian citizenship of Chinese origin and from a Malaysian culture. And my race? Bangsa Malaysia.

However, I feel saddened each time I have to fill official forms that requires to know one's race (bangsa) and the choices given are Malay, Chinese, Indian or others. I always complete my form marking "others" for my race. When questioned, my reply is that I am Bangsa Malaysia.

Let us take the cue from Dr Mahathir and begin this long and difficult journey towards a common identity for all Malaysians.

With the current Citrawarna Malaysia, one is proud when one sees cultural performances where there is an attempt to have cross-cultural dressing and performances.

Performances where the rebana and kompang are played together with the tabla and Chinese gong accompanying dancers dressed in the different ethnic costumes. This is what Malaysian culture is all about.

A time will come when a Chinese in Baju Melayu and speaking fluent Tamil and Bahasa Malaysia or a Malay in dhoti speaking fluent Mandarin raises no eyebrows.

When that time comes, who would want to know the race of the Prime Minister?

As long as he or she is Malaysian and capable of carrying out the duties of the Prime Minister of Malaysia, respected by all, of what concern is race.

Have faith and persevere, that time will come.