

02/01/2002

Treasure stability and count blessings

MALAYSIANS are a lucky lot. But unfortunately they do not always realise it. We have been blessed with peace, prosperity and stability since independence, so much so that people risk taking the nation's good fortune for granted.

They have to be reminded these do not arise out of thin air or in a vacuum. They exist because of policies, planning and efforts that took into account the sensitivities of the various races in the country, as Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad emphasised in his New Year message.

The people must continue to deepen the roots of racial harmony and goodwill. The different races must not only visit each and show friendship and understanding during major festivities. To further strengthen racial ties and unity, the different races should mix and integrate with each other on a daily basis.

It is especially crucial for the youth of various races to get to know each other and love each other, because personal bonds will grow stronger when they grow up. Among the best values we can teach our children are being sensitive to the feelings of other races and to help the others regardless of religion in time of plenty and adversity.

Many other developing countries sank into violence and disunity after independence. Malaysians, however, have successfully lived with each other in relative harmony. The moderate Malay leaders of Umno, though they represent the majority Muslim population, share power with the other non-Muslim minority races. This has encouraged patriotism and reduced racial suspicions.

Despite the attempts of religious and political extremists, chauvinists and racialists to subvert the country, the people have fortunately rejected them in the past and, we believe, in the future. But Malaysians must continue to be vigilant. They must not be swayed by sweet talk that the country will continue as before if they take over.

No, the country will not be the same. If Malaysians want to continue enjoying peace, economic progress and personal freedom, they must not waver in their support for the Government. Problems may crop up at times but we should count our blessings.

(END)