

THE STAR

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Malaysian leadership through example

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AS THE nation reaches the age of 50 most of us are proud to call ourselves Malaysians.

To be Malaysian is to be tolerant, grateful and respectful of each other irrespective of race. To be Malaysian is also to believe in one's abilities and to always have faith in the future.

I too am proud to be Malaysian. I am also proud to live in such a nation where freedom of religion is guaranteed and the government of the day takes this freedom seriously and acts against all forms of extremism.

Individual freedom and a free press are also evident in our country. In spite of the modernity and development, Malaysia remains a country with a soul.

We have a long and proud heritage and all races have thus far retained the essence of their culture or religion in spite of the racial integration that has taken place. This reason alone would be the envy of other multi racial nations.

Where integration takes place usually the culture and language of those leading the government would gradually conquer other customs or culture. This has not happened in Malaysia and we should uphold this ideal.

All of us know that racial intolerance and violence does harm to us all and only results in a divided society that is weak and unable to resist neocolonialism.

As we march forward to developed nation status, we should not forget our roots.

We must work on our weaknesses and seek to eradicate them so that our nation will retain its identity, and not only have developed but unfortunately also deteriorated in other aspects.

»We must maintain our respective cultures and values, but also recognise that we must not be bogged down by archaic principles«

We must maintain our respective cultures and values, but also recognise that we must not be bogged down by archaic principles or rules, which do the nation no good.

As parents we must ensure that westernisation does not completely invade our young and their minds. Our Asian values must be upheld lest we slide and view western culture as being 'all good'.

Though the influx of these foreign concepts can no longer be eradicated due to the Internet and globalisation, we must preserve the integrity of our society. To do this we must always remind our young what it means to be Malaysian.

Corruption too must be dealt with in a more transparent and independent manner. To attain sustainable and just development for all, corruption must be eradicated.

Although our systems still maintain their integrity, we face the real danger of slipping

into a corruption-based society. It should not be a problem maintaining integrity as all our major religions including Islam, our official religion, forbid all forms of bribery.

Economists too view corruption as a major emerging problem besotting the world today. Where there is corruption economic fundamentals collapse and economic planning cannot gain a foothold, and even the basic laws of supply and demand fail to overcome preferential supply or fictional demand.

We should have faith that our leaders recognise this and are implementing the necessary controls and enforcement to ensure that our economic fundamentals remain strong.

Celebrating our independence would mean much less if nothing were noted of our Kings. If ever in our history, it is now, at this crucial moment of nation building, that leadership through example is required of our Rulers.

All of us are poised to fight and protect ideals, which are so often encapsulated in the words of our various Rulers and the Yang Di Pertuan Agung himself.

Of late, the rakyat have put their utmost trust in our Rulers who have been more vocal in letting their ideas and opinions be known. This must continue and such trust must be well placed, and the Constitution defended if necessary.

May we continue to be the tolerant and developed society and nation, which we aspire to. Selamat Hari Merdeka.

**AZI,
Petaling Jaya, Selangor.**