

# 'OBSERVE VALUES THAT DEFINE US AS A NATION'

Practise goodwill, tolerance and readiness to share and give, says PM

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**T**HE goodwill, tolerance and readiness to give and share, which had been the foundations of the country when it achieved independence 62 years ago, must be preserved as Malaysia moves forward.

Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said these values should not have been ignored when the country achieved independence or when it had reaped the rewards of development.

He said the people should always hold on to the time-honoured values which have been practised since the time of their parents and grandparents even as the country progressed as it would guarantee that Malaysia remained on the right path.

These Malaysian values, he said, laid the foundations towards independence as it led them to successfully build a nation.

"Malaysia was built on the foundations of tolerance, goodwill, mutual respect, the readiness of give and share, selflessness and a desire to make sacrifices for the sake of the country.

"Without such traits, Malaysia would not have grown into a developed country which is capable of giving its people all the comforts and progress it has today.

"The development seen is nothing less stellar than what is seen in other countries and, at times, what we reap is far better than other countries," Dr Mahathir said in his 62nd National Day message.

He said it was unfortunate that much of the values were pushed aside nowadays as the ugly side of Malaysians could be seen whenever sensitive issues were raised about race and religion.

"Unfortunately, if we look around us and while we are immersed in advancements made in communication and digitalisation, these good values have been sidelined for hideous behaviour.



Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad giving his 2019 National Day message in Putrajaya yesterday. BERNAMA PIC

"What is most damaging is when these bad traits become apparent when dealing with sensitive issues related to race and religion.

"When defending their respective religion or race, a diatribe against another race and religion occurs with the use of offensive words, which eventually causes anger and uneasiness.

"It is strange because if we want to defend our religion and race, we should be using civilised language and behaviour. But the opposite occurs," said Dr Mahathir.

He urged Malaysians to search within themselves for their spirit of comradeship and nationhood which had enabled the country to achieve independence and become developed.

"We need to ask ourselves if we want to no longer care about the country's future while we are defending the narrow interests of our respective race and religion.

"If we are truly sincere, we will realise how much we have reaped in our country.

"If we have that realisation, we would find ways and strive hard to defend it."

Dr Mahathir said Malaysians should learn from the lessons of other countries, which had once enjoyed the fruits of prosperity only to see them all ruined and their countrymen become refugees who fled to other countries. He said conflicts could occur when one segment of society demanded for its interest, but had to face another segment of society which did not want to be tolerant or willing to forgive.

On another matter, he said the government was focusing on the Wawasan Kemakmuran

Bersama (Vision of Shared Prosperity) which aims to provide a reasonable standard of living for Malaysians.

The objective of the vision was to turn Malaysia into a major Asian economic focal point, while increasing the people's spending power and narrowing the income gap between the differing classes, races and regions.

"Wawasan Kemakmuran Bersama is an effort to turn Malaysia into a country with sustainable growth with a fair and inclusive distribution of economy at all levels of value chains, class, races and geographical locations. These are done towards achieving harmony and stability among the people by 2030."

Dr Mahathir said ensuring that Malaysia was corruption-free was a top priority for the government.

"Among the biggest disasters in the country are cases of corruption, and this has also affected the public services sector.

"To ensure that our policies are not sabotaged by those who abuse power and accept bribes, the government has placed the eradication of corruption as one of its main objectives.

"That is why this year's National Day is themed 'Love Our Malaysia: A Clean Malaysia'. We hope to rid the country of corrupt practices as it could stifle our efforts to provide for the people's prosperity."

Dr Mahathir reminded the people that Aug 31, 1957, was the start of freedom from a foreign power, who had previously plundered the country's resources for its interest.