

# PUT MALAYSIA FIRST

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**C**OME Aug 31, we celebrate National Day. This year's theme, *Malaysia Prihatin* (Malaysia Cares), is apt and relevant as it shows how as a nation, we care for fellow citizens and the less fortunate.

This is a celebration in the new normal. Let us thank and commend frontliners who have helped us through the difficult Covid-19 period.

In commemorating National Day, I believe we need to uphold and practise the 5Rs: Rukun Negara, racial harmony, respect, reconciliation and religious tolerance. These values will boost our unity.

We need to reduce the 5Ds, or divides that divide us: political, wealth, geographical, digital and racial divide. The younger generation must be involved in the struggle to end this divide so that we can build a better future for Malaysians.

We should reimagine Malaysia as a united, tolerant, progressive, inclu-

sive, sustainable and technologically-enabled and advanced nation where the potential of every Malaysian is developed and used.

At the same time, we need to focus more on the 4Is — integrity, innovation, inclusiveness and institutions — to ensure the future Malaysia is innovative, our people and leaders have strong integrity, and we have effective and strong institutions.

To achieve all of these, we need to put “Malaysia First”. Let us put aside sectarian interests for the greater interest of the nation so that in all that we do and say, Malaysia will come first.

I thank Tawfik Dr Ismail Abdul Rahman, a former member of parliament and son of former deputy prime minister Tun Dr Ismail, for founding a group called Malaysia First, which has more than 1,000 members. I am honoured to be invited to be part of this group.

We should push ahead with the goal of putting “Malaysia First”. Let this be a movement that brings more like-minded Malaysians to celebrate our diversity and commitment to the country as we celebrate the National Day in the new normal.

As our National Day this year is also the 50th anniversary of the Rukun Negara, we are organising a roundtable on Rukun Negara the next day to remind young Malaysians about the principles and, more importantly, the preamble of the Rukun Negara, which encapsulates its goals:

The goals of the Rukun Negara must be highlighted as we often forget them.

**ACHIEVING** and fostering greater unity;

**PRESERVING** a democratic way of life;

**CREATING** a just society where the prosperity of the country can be enjoyed together in a fair and



National Day is a good time to celebrate Malaysia's diversity. FILE PIC

equitable manner;

**ENSURING** a liberal approach towards the rich and varied cultural traditions; and,

**BUILDING** a prosperous society that will make use of science and technology.

Let us celebrate our independence, unity, diversity and uphold moderation and tolerance. Selamat Hari Merdeka.

**TAN SRI MICHAEL YEOH**

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