

HONOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NATION

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“YOUR deeds will be remembered” or “Jasamu Dikenang” ring loud and clear among Malaysians when announcing their contributions to the country in whatever form. In practice, this culture of recognition has been slow in taking off here.

This is apparent on a the national level involving the Federal and state governments, their agencies and related institutions. In the private sector, the record has been creditable as companies have established many different awards and honours for employees in various levels of the management.

Malaysia, however, is nowhere near the mark set by other countries. For example, we look forward to hearing from Sweden about the winners of the annual Nobel Prize, especially the Nobel Peace Prize. In Europe, it has been led by the Eurovision Song Contest and in the United Kingdom, we have the Booker Prize award for excellence in literature.

In Asia, Japan has list of awards in the fields of management, biodi-



The National Day celebration is good way to let the world learn more about the Malaysian story and its experience at nation building. FILE PIC

versity and world-class excellence. In the United States, they range from the Presidential Freedom Award, excellence awards in the film industry (Oscar Awards), and in literature (Pulitzer Book Prize).

The problem has been how to spread the practice of recognition

and rewards to cover other sectors to honour innovativeness, excellence, achievements and contributions within a wider spectrum of sciences, arts, sports and politics to name a few. This may also bring in awards and honours to those across the different racial groups and communities, gen-

der, age and the various nationalities locally and internationally too.

A good example has been set by the government to commemorate the country's National Day on Aug 31 every year since 1957, the year of Merdeka (Independence)

Come Aug 31 2020, the country will be celebrating the 63rd anniversary of its Merdeka. In the past, this day would be observed with a grand parade made up of the military, government agencies and organisations and the people from all walks of life in the middle of the city in the morning, attended by Yang di-Pertuan Agong and Raja Permaisuri Agong together with the members of the government diplomatic representatives and other dignitaries.

This will be followed in the evening by a concert filled with music, singing and dancing, and of course, ending with a big display of fireworks in various parts of the city.

To complete the celebration, the King and Queen, on the following day, would be bestowing awards and honours to distinguished recipients

in recognition of their contributions to the country.

The rationale for extending activities beyond the areas identified above is the need to let the world know more about the Malaysian story and its experience at nation building. Throughout the years of the country's Independence until today, the nation has gone through periods of excellence and achievements.

All of these must be presented to the people and the world. There is also the urgent task on the part of the government to see the people's pride and confidence restored amid the Covid-19 crisis.

Perhaps it is time for the government to convene a “National Committee on Jasamu Dikenang” to make the appropriate recommendations and initiatives to introduce awards for excellence and achievements in any number of areas, whether it be science, management, international cooperation or even Asean.

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