

MAKE KELUARGA MALAYSIA A SUCCESS

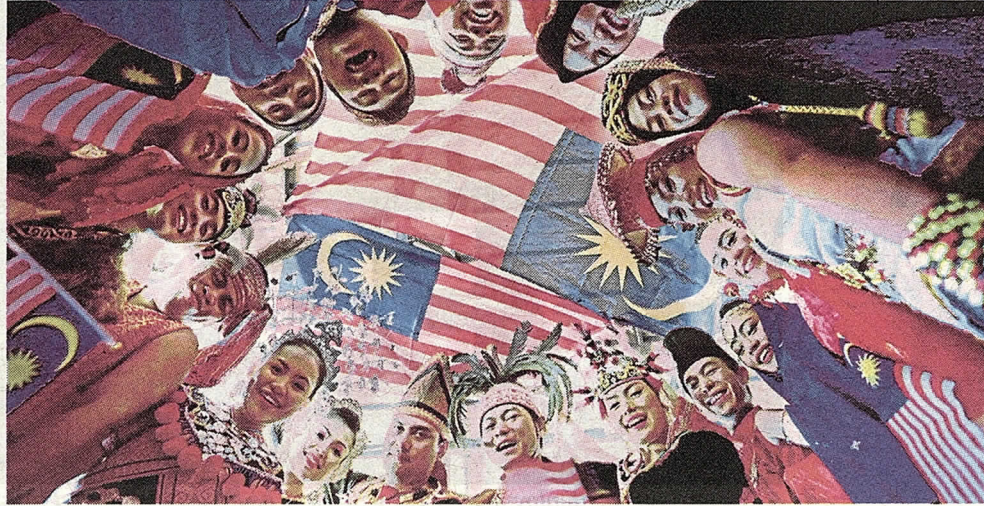
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THIS is the month of Keluarga Malaysia, a slogan introduced by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob “to strengthen family ties and embrace the spirit of inclusion in the wider Malaysian Family” at the launch of Bulan Keluarga Malaysia 2021 at Taman Botanical Perdana on Nov 7.

At His Majesty’s official birthday celebration at Istana Negara on Nov 13, Yang Di-Pertuan Agong Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri’ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah reiterated the crucial spirit of Keluarga Malaysia and called for the country to be competitive and to achieve greater heights with an “inclusive and fair Malaysian Family”.

Despite the pandemic being a time of great stress, difficulty and disruption in living and livelihoods, the period also saw the emergence of goodness with evidence of many people from various race, religion, culture and background spontaneously providing material, financial and emotional support to the downtrodden, weak and vulnerable.

We were encouraged when National Unity Minister Datuk Halimah Mohamed Sadique launched a national unity action plan with the aim of cultivating community unity and goodwill consistent with the vision of Keluarga Malaysia. A principal thrust in the plan involves the creation of Rukun Negara Clubs in schools and Rukun Negara secretariats in universities.



Malaysians must unite in the spirit of Rukun Negara.

BERNAMA PIC

We applaud this initiative as education is where it all begins and where humanity, inclusiveness, unity and respect amongst all the diverse members of our Malaysian family is nurtured.

Effective inculcation of Rukun Negara requires us to live the spirit of Rukun Negara and this spirit, like that associated with Keluarga Malaysia, has to be lived top down beginning with exemplary leadership. We have witnessed sufficient examples of poor leadership, courage and behaviour to conclude that this spirit is sorely lacking and, for which, we, as a nation, will continue to suffer.

Our future will depend on our young and education plays a most critical role. The question we ask is,

how can the vision of Keluarga Malaysia and the expectations of Rukun Negara be achieved when our schools are deeply polarised in student enrolment and teacher employment?

“Whats” are important but the “hows” are critical for, in the end, to accomplish our aims, we will need to ensure that participation is representative of all communities.

Making national schools the preferred choice for all communities is the way forward, but do we have the political will and guts to do what is right, make the critical adjustments that we desperately need to make and do what is right without fear or favour?

Without first resolving the “hows” in access to education, equitable opportunities in education, school

compositions and curriculum and cultural history, the unity action plan will fail for lack of substance and participation.

There are, of course, programmes planned by the government to enhance unity and solidarity among our people of various ethnicities, cultures and belief systems. Whilst some have survived, many have floundered.

While these plans may indicate the government’s keenness to foster good and harmonious relations among all Malaysians, an analysis of these will unfold a litany of weaknesses with equitable participation, inevitably, the common determinant of success or failure.

If we are to continue to survive as a vibrant, cohesive, inclusive and rigor-

ous nation of substance, we will need to unshackle the chains of old habits, throw out old baggage and ghettos of the past and move forward with courage and political will to reverse the downward spiral the country seems to be taking.

For a start, we call for:

THE rejuvenation of the National Unity Consultative Council, where stakeholders will be given the opportunity to combine their talent and experience in the construction of plans and programmes designed to strengthen solidarity and unity, embrace our diversity and build strong ethno-religious relations;

A SERIOUS professional and objective review of our education system to make national schools the preferred choice for all students without hampering growth of vernacular schools, all with the development of our young, foremost in mind;

THE early and just resolution of the institution of effective enforcement to act quickly and firmly against those with an agenda to cause hatred and disrespect and widen divisions in society.

We pray that Keluarga Malaysia will be different, breathe new energies and bring new hope and not end up, like the rest, in the dustbins of tomorrow.

**BRIG-GEN (R)
DATUK RICHARD ROBLESS**

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