

# 'Appreciate racial harmony'

## Youths must not take our unity for granted, says historian

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**PETALING JAYA:** The unity forged between the Malays, Chinese and Indians by our founding fathers should be better appreciated by the younger generation, says Prof Datuk Dr Ramlah Adam.

"Unity is still important for the nation today as it was back then.

"Our founding fathers worked hard to lay this down as a foundation and were very clear that Malaysia should be united.

"This led to the setting up of the Alliance by Umno, MCA and MIC to unite the Malays, Chinese and Indians," she said when contacted yesterday.

Ramlah, a respected historian who has authored several books, said all three parties worked closely with the people to secure independence from the British.

"The people had a common enemy in fighting communism and they were more simple minded and respectful of the leaders.

"Unlike today, where most people are critical of leaders even to the extent of being disrespectful to the Rulers," she said.

She blamed gullibility towards fake news on social media and narrow racial and religious politics as factors threatening unity.

The Alliance, under then Umno president Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra al-Haj, MCA president Tun Tan Cheng Lock, and MIC president Tun V.T. Sambanthan, was forged in the early 1950s.



**Stronger together:** Tunku Abdul Rahman (centre) chairing the first Malaysian Cabinet meeting in Parliament House, Kuala Lumpur, back in 1964. He is flanked by (from left) Tun Tan Siew Sin, Tun Abdul Razak Hussein, Tun Dr Ismail Abdul Rahman, and Tun VT Sambanthan. - National Archives of Malaysia

In 1952, MCA joined forces with Umno to contest in the Kuala Lumpur municipal elections, with MIC following suit in 1954.

All three parties contested under the Alliance in Malaya's first general election in 1955, where they won 51 of the 52 seats.

In January 1956, a Roundtable Conference took place between the Alliance and representatives of the Malay Rulers with British officials in Lancaster House in London to discuss independence for the Federation of Malaya.

On Feb 8 that year, Tunku Abdul Rahman signed the Treaty of London with the then British secretary of state for the colonies, Alan Lennox-Boyd, guaranteeing that the Federation of Malaya would become an independent nation from Aug 31, 1957.

The Alliance was officially recognised as a political organisation in October 1957 and played a key role in the formation of the Federation of Malaysia in 1963, which included Sabah and Sarawak.

Relations were forged between the Alliance and other parties from Sabah and Sarawak which led to the formation of the Barisan Nasional coalition in 1973.

Ramlah lamented that unity is being taken for granted, particularly by the younger generation.

"It is not merely about parades, cheering and shouting Merdeka on Aug 31. It has to be about understanding what unity really means for the nation," she said.

She added that even the King had taken to Facebook on Independence Day yesterday to

remind the people that racial unity is the main key to harmony and well-being of the nation.

Meanwhile, in his National Day address on Wednesday, prime minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said unity which had been long practised by the country's forefathers must remain the core spirit of the people today and in the future.

"We became a family. Malaysia belongs to all of her people," said Anwar, who also paid tribute to the security forces, saying that it would have been a challenge to preserve peace and independence if not for them.

"We attained Independence with the Malays, Bumiputra, Chinese and Indians. Then, we formed Malaysia with our friends in Sabah and Sarawak" he added.

**Unity is important. Any political differences can wait until the next general election. Let's focus on nation building and getting everyone to work together. What we want is for Malaysia to compete with other developing countries.**

Tan Sri Low Kian Chuan  
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Chinese Chamber of  
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