

NATIONAL SPIRIT: Merdeka is about unity

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By David Tih,

SINCE Malaysia obtained independence from the British 55 years ago, Malaysia has developed and progressed tremendously, both politically and socio-economically, and is today one of the most advanced, peaceful and prosperous nations in the world.

Like all countries, we, too, have had our ups and downs in our struggle for a better nation.

Fortunately and thankfully, the country has been blessed with a good and responsible government that is peace-loving and forward-thinking.

This, in a way, was greatly influenced by the spirit of oneness and brotherhood of the nation's founding fathers: Tunku Abdul Rahman, Tun Tan Cheng Lock and Tun V.T. Sambanthan.

In setting the nation free, our forefathers wanted the people to be truly independent, free, happy and successful.

They wanted us to excel and to love, help and protect each other in good times or bad, realise our potential and raise the country to greater heights.

As loyal and responsible citizens, we must live up to their legacy and fulfil the original Merdeka spirit.

It is the Muhibah spirit among us that paved the way for a new nation that belongs to all races. All Malaysians can and must play a role in nation-building.

We must make sure we never take the nation's peace, stability and prosperity for granted.

We must continue to work together to boost unity and improve race relations.

When we remember and celebrate Merdeka Day, the spirit of patriotism appears naturally.

Being patriotic means loving and serving one's country in the best manner. It does not just mean waving the Jalur Gemilang, singing Negaraku, reciting the Rukun Negara or chanting the 1Malaysia slogan.

It is the duty and responsibility of all quarters -- the government, the opposition, the people, politicians, police and security forces -- to put national interest and well-being above anything else.

Malaysia is a democratic country and it is important that its people know how to exercise their rights with responsibility and understanding. The people, especially politicians, public figures and community leaders, must agree to disagree, not be overzealous or say and do things that may hurt the nation.

Malaysians must reject violence, abuse of power, corruption, fanaticism, racialism, injustice and prejudice.

National Day is all about national unity and oneness. It is this unity and oneness that will propel the nation forward.

A multiracial government must continue to lead the way for national good and success and to prove to the world we are indeed worthy of what the nation's founding fathers did 55 years ago.

The original Merdeka spirit, the Federal Constitution and the Rukun Negara must be our most cherished guides.

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