

Rekindle Rukun Negara spirit

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LETTER: Lest Malaysians get despondent over the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, it will be good to be reminded that in the past, the nation had faced and overcome many problems with unity, foresight and fortitude.

Among them were the Emergency (1948-1960), the Indonesian Confrontation (1963-1966) and the tragedy of May 13, 1969. To ensure that we do not repeat this blight in our history, we introduced Rukun Negara.

It has been 50 years since we introduced this national philosophy, which is relevant and worth practising today.

Its goals are:

Achieving greater unity;

Maintaining a democratic way of life;

Creating a just society;

Adopting a liberal approach to cultural traditions, and;

Building a progressive society oriented to science and technology

These goals are premised on five principles:

Belief in God;

Loyalty to king and country;

Upholding the Constitution;

Rule of law; and,

Good social behaviour and morality.

Rukun Negara was formulated to achieve a minimum consensus with regard to national aspirations among the diverse communities and to build a united nation, regardless of location or ethnic characteristics.

Rukun Negara, as well as the Federal Constitution, are important guidelines for nation-building.

It is welcome news that Communications and Multimedia Minister Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah has announced that the 50th anniversary of Rukun Negara would be commemorated in conjunction with National Day this year.

His announcement is timely for several reasons.

First, the principles of Rukun Negara seemed to have been lost in the transition from the 1970s to 1980s and beyond. There is hardly any reference to, and a call to adhere to, its aims and principles in the affairs of the nation.

Second, we seem to be preoccupied with issues that tend to obscure rather than celebrate our diversity.

Third, there are times when it seem that we are in danger of losing our sense of fair play, give and take, and caring and sharing.

The time has come for the nation to rekindle the spirit of Rukun Negara. Let's give it a new lease of life. That is a sure way to nurture a harmonious nation. The time is now to put the five principles of Rukun Negara into practice, especially among the young generation.

Although Rukun Negara is taught in schools, it does not serve much purpose if students only memorise the tenets but do not practise them. Let us promote them through all medium to build a united nation.

We owe that much to ourselves and to the next generations.

TAN SRI LEE LAM THYE

TRUSTEE, MALAYSIA UNITY FOUNDATION

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