

National Day theme invites people to strengthen unity to face challenges

By Bernama - August 14, 2023 @ 9:36am

KUALA LUMPUR: 'Malaysia Madani: Tekad Perpaduan Penuhi Harapan', (Determination in Unity, Fulfilling Hope) is not just a random theme chosen for this year's National Month in August but has a deep meaning to be appreciated by all Malaysians who love their country.

The theme invites Malaysians to strengthen the spirit of unity in facing various challenges together, including the current global economic uncertainty.

Political analyst Mujibu Abd Muis said the theme clearly symbolises how important unity is in driving the country's economic development and raising Malaysians' living standards to a higher level.

"It is important for countries like multi-ethnic Malaysia to unite because cooperation is the country's main asset. If the races can accommodate one another and live in harmony, the unification of multiracial citizens will bring many benefits to the country in the economic and social sectors.

"Economic progress can only be achieved if there is stability. Stability can only exist if the people are united and help each other, but if they are divided and fight, the country will become backward and be destroyed," he told Bernama.

Mujibu, who is also Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) Institution of Malay Rulers Chair fellow, added that the theme reflected the government's determination to strengthen unity by emphasising mutual understanding and tolerance between races in addition to improving weaknesses that exist in the communities.

In the context of the uniqueness of Malaysia, which has people of various races, religions and cultures, the Constitution and Rukun Negara need to be used as guides no matter what the situation so that the country remains peaceful, he added.

The government can continue to strengthen unity by diversifying patriotic activities, creating an effective long-term plan to shape the identity of the nation and ensure that any form of extremism that affects harmony between races and religions does not occur, he said.

Meanwhile, Professor of Social Anthropology at the Academy of Professors Malaysia's (APM) Department of Social and Development Sciences, Dr Sarjit Singh Gill said unity is important in making Malaysia a developed country that is respected at the international level and subsequently attract foreign investment.

"They (investors) are looking at political aspects, especially stability and governance. I believe Malaysian society is becoming more rational and committed to sowing the seeds of positive unity not only in family institutions but also in religious, educational and political institutions," he said.

Sarjit Singh also said the idealism brought through this year's National Day theme is important to build the country's identity as desired since independence.

"The national unity agenda is still being pursued persistently by the government since independence in 1957 and the formation of Malaysia in 1963. This effort is challenged by the dynamic political and social landscape, especially in managing ethnic diversity in Malaysia," he said.

He thinks that this year's theme clearly shows the government's determination to stress the importance of mutual respect and concern for impartiality in an effort to achieve Malaysia Madani.

"Truth, equality and love serve as guidance in every religion. I have noticed that our society lives in harmony and appreciates diversity as a strength," he said.

According to him, there are disruptions at times, when groups deliberately incite issues of race, religion and royal institutions (3R) to gain political mileage.

"In my opinion, these groups need to read and study the National Unity Policy, the National Cultural Policy and the National Security Policy. All of these policies are important in instilling human relations and a culture of peace thus building a good understanding in community living," he said.

National Day is celebrated on Aug 31 with main celebrations being held at Dataran Putrajaya while the Malaysia Day celebration will be held on Sept 16 at Unity Stadium, Kuching, Sarawak.- BERNAMA