

# Reflecting on Rukun Negara

Dialogue organised at varsity to mark 50th anniversary of national philosophy

TO MARK National Day and the 50th anniversary of Rukun Negara, a social enterprise organised a dialogue at Universiti Malaya (UM).

The topic was “Rukun Negara Sebagai Asas Perpaduan Bangsa Malaysia” and Projek57 collaborated with UM’s Centre for Civilisational Dialogue.

The dialogue was part of a series launched by the centre as a means to stimulate conversations that enhance mutual understanding and strengthen relations among communities in the country.

UM alumnus Datuk Dr Mahmood Merican, who launched the session, said in his opening remarks: “Let us build a united Malaysian nation where each citizen is entitled to and treated with dignity, respect and compassion.”

The dialogue delved into the role played by Rukun Negara in Malaysia since its introduction 50 years ago and how its values need to be instilled and reinforced among youths to promote unity and hope.

Three panellists comprising Projek57 co-founder Syed Sadiq Albar, Pusaka director and founder Eddin Khoo and Muslim Youth Movement Malaysia (Abim) central committee vice-president Zairudin Hashim, who doubled up as the moderator, discussed the role of Rukun Negara to drive unity, its significance today and why youth communities in particular need to reconnect with the values of Rukun Negara.

Syed Sadiq said the values of Rukun Negara had been ingrained into Projek 57’s



(From left) Khoo, Centre for Civilisational Dialogue deputy director Dr Alwani Ghazali, Dr Mahmood, Dr Rosilawati, UM deputy vice-chancellor Prof Dr Norsaadah Abd Rahman, Zairudin, Projek57 co-founder Collin Swee and Syed Sadiq at the dialogue where they talked about the role of Rukun Negara in building Bangsa Malaysia.

movement of hope among youth.

“We tend to focus on differences and often overlook our similarities as Malaysians.

“It is our similarities that we should be celebrating as we empower youth communities to rise above limitations and challenges, and by doing so, move forward together,” he said.

Zairudin noted that unlike Turkey and India, the Federal Constitution did not have a preamble.

“Thus, Rukun Negara plays an integral

role as an anchor of unity for the country.

“Like the spirit of Pancasila in Indonesia, our Rukun Negara provides the philosophy and moral values to be inculcated in the souls of the *rakyat*.”

Khoo opined that the lack of collective memory was one of the great wounds of this country.

“We need to remember that we were a community long before we were a nation.

“The Rukun Negara should urge all Malaysians to embrace our collective

memory beyond the confines of official history,” he said.

The centre’s director Assoc-Prof Dr Rosilawati Zainol believes civilisational conversations are vital for people to better appreciate and celebrate similarities and differences which in turn can foster unity.

“A true independence is the freedom of mind and soul that is nurtured through identity building. It is shaped by four core aspects; religion, language, education and morals,” she said.