

'Usah ambil mudah nikmat perpaduan'

Pencapaian,
kejayaan negara
paling bermakna:
Halimah

Kuala Lumpur: Perpaduan teguh antara rakyat Malaysia adalah kejayaan negara yang tidak boleh diambil mudah, kata Menteri Perpaduan Negara, Datuk Halimah Mohamed Sadique.

Katanya, ia adalah pencapaian dan kejayaan negara yang paling bermakna, justeru segala usaha, kesedaran dan keinginan untuk melestarikan keharmonian antara rakyat harus terus diperkukuhkan.

Beliau berkata, kekayaan budaya, kepelbagaian bangsa dan warna-warni kehidupan setiap rakyat Malaysia membentuk asas serta mencorakkan kemakmuran tanah air.

"Meskipun sambutan Hari Malaysia tahun ini diraikan

secara sederhana, saya yakin rasa kebersamaan dalam kalangan rakyat Malaysia tetap terserlah dengan mengamalkan nilai yang menyatupadukan.

"Marilah kita sama-sama menyambut Hari Malaysia kali ini dengan penuh bersemangat, semoga ia mengeratkan lagi silaturahmi sesama kita.

"Kesediaan ini tentunya akan mengekalkan sejahtera di bawah payung kedaulatan negara," katanya dalam satu kenyataan, semalam.

Halimah turut berharap se-

luruh rakyat Malaysia terus peka dan mematuhi prosedur operasi standard (SOP) norma baharu dalam memerangi penularan COVID-19, di samping memelihara nilai murni dan kesopanan.

Hari ini, seluruh rakyat negara ini akan menyambut Hari Malaysia 2020 dengan sambutan peringkat kebangsaan berlangsung di Stadium Tertutup Sibu, Sarawak yang akan dihadiri Perdana Menteri, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

BERNAMA

Meskipun sambutan Hari Malaysia tahun ini diraikan secara sederhana, saya yakin rasa kebersamaan dalam kalangan rakyat Malaysia tetap terserlah.

**Halimah Mohamed Sadique,
Menteri Perpaduan Negara**



Sambutan Hari Malaysia pada tahun lalu.
(Foto fail)

Jangan ambil mudah nikmat perpaduan dikecapi ketika ini

KUALA LUMPUR - Perpaduan yang teguh antara rakyat Malaysia adalah kejayaan negara yang tidak boleh diambil mudah, kata Menteri Perpaduan Negara, Datuk Halimah Mohamed Sadique.

Tegasnya, ia adalah pencapaian dan kejayaan negara yang paling bermakna, justeru, segala usaha, kesedaran dan keinginan untuk melestarikan keharmonian antara rakyat harus terus diperkukuhkan.

Beliau berkata, kekayaan budaya, kepelbagaian bangsa dan warna-warni kehidupan setiap rakyat Malaysia telah membentuk asas dan mencorakkan kemakmuran tanah air.

“Meskipun sambutan Hari Malaysia tahun ini di-



HALIMAH

raikan secara sederhana, namun saya yakin, rasa kebersamaan dalam kalangan rakyat Malaysia tetap terserlah dengan mengamalkan nilai-nilai yang menyatupadukan.

“Marilah kita sama-sama menyambut Hari Malaysia kali ini dengan penuh bersemangat, semoga ia mengeratkan lagi silaturahim sesama kita. Kesediaan ini tentunya akan mengekalkan sejahtera di bawah payung kedaulatan negara,” katanya dalam satu kenyataan di sini semalam.

Halimah turut berharap seluruh rakyat Malaysia terus peka dan mematuhi prosedur operasi standard (SOP) normal baharu dalam memerangi penularan Covid-19, di samping memelihara nilai-nilai murni dan kesopanan.

It's all about unity

MALAYSIA Day is all about unity, says Peter Luruthudass Annaniah, 51.

"This special day commemorates unity between Peninsular Malaysia, and Sabah and Sarawak. In a country with so many ethnicities and faiths, multicultural families are a way of uniting different cultures," says Peter.

Peter and his wife Maria Kirau Lusat, 42, live in Penang. They each come from very different cultures.

"My father is a typical Indian man – very strict and deeply religious – that's why our names are all very Indian," says Peter, who grew up in Tapah, Perak where his grandfather used to practice Ayurvedic medicine.

Maria is from Kampung Long Moh in Ulu Baram, Miri, Sarawak. She is Kenyah (an indigenous group from Sarawak).

They celebrated their 15th wedding anniversary last month.

The couple reveals that in the early stages of their relationship, they had to learn to adapt to each other's different cultural ways.

"I come from an Indian family and work for a German company where everything must be precise and on the dot. Then, I met Maria, and it was a whole different world. In Sarawak, life is more relaxed, people tend to 'take it easy'.

"When I come home from work, I have to change my paradigm because everything moves at a more laidback pace at home," Peter shares.

Maria adds: "Having mutual respect and tolerance towards each other is so important in a multicultural family."

Communication can be challenging sometimes, especially with family members who don't speak any common languages. But it can also have its funny moments.

"When I went to see Maria's parents to ask for her hand in marriage, I remember talking to her mother and wondering, 'Why is she not replying? Is there anything wrong? Is she objecting?'," Peter recalls.

It was actually because she didn't understand English; Maria had forgotten to inform him!

"My mother only speaks Kenyah. As the idiom goes, it's 'like a chicken and duck talking'," Maria says.

Peter speaks Malay, English,



Maria is wearing a traditional Kenyah outfit, while Peter is dressed in a Sarawakian warrior's costume. — PETER LURUTHUDASS ANNANIAH

Tamil and German, and he picked up Kenyah from his wife, and also a bit of Cantonese. Maria speaks Malay, English and Kenyah.

At home, they speak English, Malay and a bit of Kenyah to their children.

Their two children – a daughter, 14, and a son, 12 – have mixed reactions about being a multicultural family.

"Our daughter says that although it's difficult having to follow two different cultures, she feels blessed too," Peter says, feigning shock when revealing that his son prefers his wife's Kenyah culture over his Indian culture.

Being a multicultural family means celebrating festivals in unique ways. Peter feels that being part of a multicultural family is like having the best of both worlds.

"I love Kenyah culture – their Sape music, tuai (harvest) festival, Ngajat dance, and how they celebrate festivals.

"I also like Maria's kampung deep in the interior of Sarawak with its clean environment and beautiful rivers," he says.

Meanwhile, Maria says, "The nice thing about being from a multicultural family is tasting different types of food." Some of the traditional Kenyah dishes she makes are ayam pansuh, adut, anyeh and kerumet.

A world of colour

Three Malaysian families share the adventures of being part of multiracial and multicultural homes.

Stories By MING TEOH
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TO Ignatius Paul Massang, 49, Malaysia Day is the perfect time to celebrate unity in diversity.

Massang, the eldest of three siblings, comes from a multicultural family. His father is Portuguese-Eurasian, with ancestors from Penang and Melaka, while his mother is a Chinese from Perak.

"This is a day when everyone can dress up in their different cultural attire to celebrate unity and diversity. There is a sense of belonging and togetherness," says Massang, who lives with his wife and children in Kuala Lumpur.

Massang is married to Beatrix Joyo, 40, who is Chinese and was born in Jakarta, Indonesia. They have three children together – a son aged 12, and twin daughters, aged six.

"Our multiculturalism is something that we as Malaysians should be proud of. At events, you can see a Chinese girl wearing a kebaya or saree, or an Indian girl wearing a cheongsam or baju kurung. This is something that you won't find anywhere else," Massang says.

Joyo comes from a large family and is the eighth of nine children.

"My dad is Chinese while my mum is Chinese with a little bit of Dutch from my great-grandfather," she says.

Being a multicultural family can be an adventure when it comes to food. "At home, I cook more Chinese food, and sometimes, Malaysian and Indonesian dishes, while my husband cooks more Western-style dishes," Joyo says.

Some of the dishes they make include nasi uduk, kering tempe, nasi lemak and chicken rice.

"Growing up, my siblings and I enjoyed Portuguese food such as Devil's curry and chilli crab which my mum learnt to make from my paternal grandmother.

"My wife has yet to attempt making these dishes although we have the recipes kept safely for future reference," Massang says.



Massang and Joyo with their three children. — IGNATIUS PAUL MASSANG



Being "mixed" is not without its challenges. "Growing up, I often got asked 'what are you?' or 'what is Eurasian?' and 'how did you end up in Malaysia?'," he says.

Although it can be challenging, and sometimes embarrassing having to always explain one's family history to strangers, it's necessary to see things positively and with a touch of humour, Massang says.

"Even my surname has raised some interesting questions before," he shares. "It originated from the Portuguese-French name 'Massone', and eventually evolved to Massang ... and one day, it will evolve to massage!" he adds, laughing.

Massang reveals that their son,

Peter, used to feel awkward about of his multiethnicity.

"He asked me one day, 'why am I different from others – others have Malay, Chinese or Indian names, but why am I *lain-lain*?' I told him, we're Eurasian – a mix of European and Asian," Massang says.

But now, Peter has grown to embrace his own unique identity.

"Being from a multicultural family is 'colourful' – and we stand as one of the examples of how diversity can be beautiful. I love it because we get to celebrate more festive seasons together," Joyo notes.

"For my family, Christmas is a big thing. We go to church and then have a family dinner. There are also parties and drinking. Then, on Boxing Day, we open the presents," Massang says.

"Chinese New Year and Chap Goh Meh are a big thing for my side of the family," Joyo adds.

"We'll gather at one (relative's) house, have a potluck, give and receive ang paos, play cards together, plus have a mandatory family photo session," she concludes.

'Cherish unity in the country'

Leaders call for Malaysians to protect country's racial cohesiveness

SIBU: Malaysia Day is very important to Sarawak as it brings a significant meaning to the multiracial community in the state, said State Secretary Datuk Amar Jaul Samion.

Sarawak is a model state with a high degree of tolerance, acceptance and mutual respect among the people of different religious beliefs, he added.

Speaking at an Inter-Faith Unity Programme in conjunction with Malaysia Day celebration here, he pointed out that Sarawak is the only state to have a unit called Unit for Other Religions (Unifor), which operates as a government agency looking after the needs of non-Muslims.

Through the unit, which reflects Sarawak's priorities on inclusivity

"I hope that there will be better understanding between the states in Malaysia."

Tan Sri James Masing

and diversity, the people are able to voice out issues pertinent to the evaluation and formulation of policies, laws and regulations on non-Islamic religious affairs.

Jaul said Unifor acted as a focal point for the various religious bodies to liaise and interact with the state and federal government agencies in the matter of applications for land and funding for the construction of houses of worship, and it had expanded into socio-economic activities where its services may be needed for such purposes.

In Kuching, as Malaysia Day dawned, Sarawak deputy chief minister Tan Sri James Masing is calling for better infrastructure in the state's rural areas. He said his wish was for all 5,000-odd villages and longhouses in Sarawak to be connected by roads and have electricity and water supply by 2030.

"I also hope rural schools will be

connected to the Internet so that students are not deprived of their education, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic and enforcement of the movement control order," he said.

Masing also called for a peaceful and stable political climate to prevail in the nation.

"I hope that there will be better understanding between the states and regions in Malaysia," he added.

The Malaysia Day celebration will be held at the Sibu Indoor Stadium today with the theme "*Malaysia Prihatin*" (Malaysia Cares), in recognition of the nation's efforts to address Covid-19.

In Kuala Lumpur, National Unity Minister, Datuk Halimah Mohamed Sadique said the strong unity among

Malaysians is the country's success that cannot be taken lightly.

Unity is the country's most meaningful achievement, hence, all efforts, awareness and desire to preserve harmony among the people must continue to be strengthened, she added.

"Although Malaysia Day is celebrated moderately this year, I am confident that the feeling of togetherness among the people is still exhibited through the practice of values that unite us.

"Let us celebrate Malaysia Day together, with full of enthusiasm, to bring us closer together. This will keep the peace under the country's sovereignty," she said in a statement here.