

Merdeka In The Eyes Of The Young



KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 30 (Bernama) -- When Malaysia gained independence on 31 August 1957, these youngsters were not even born. Yet for these patriotic Malaysian youths, Merdeka is close to their hearts. Their spirit of patriotism is evident in the way they express their love and loyalty to the country.

When met by Bernama at a rehearsal for the Patriotic Day Carnival, an event organised by the Ministry of Higher Education and institutions of higher learning at University College Sedaya International (UCSI) here, these youngsters spoke from their hearts on the meaning of true patriotism and what it meant to them.



Qharirull al
Hafidz

They may be from different race and religious backgrounds, but to them, August 31 has a significant meaning.

For Qharirull al Hafidz, a first year Diploma in Computer Science and Multimedia student, Merdeka celebrations is a reminder of the struggles for the nation's independence.

"I would love to take part in the national day parade rather than just joining the audience as this will help me to show my love for the country

and its leaders," said the former student of Kolej Shahputra in Kuantan.

Qharirull said he is happy living in a country where harmony exists among all the three major races.

"Although we are so different in many ways but we have proven that we can live in harmony with each other. This is what makes us as one nation," he said.

Sam Yee Chang, a 19 year old, feels patriotism is very much alive.

"We always fly the national flag at our home and have one in our car to show that we are proud to be Malaysians.

"We also should learn to appreciate the contributions of our leaders," she said.

CELEBRATING TOGETHER

Preethi Raghavan, a third-year pharmacy student, said she would love to join the crowd on the National Day.

"Celebrating with our countrymen brings a greater sense of being a citizen," she said.



Preethi Raghavan

"It is really a beautiful thing, I think we should safeguard this spirit. Patriotism has still not been deeply instilled in most Malaysians," she said.



Saravanan
Krishnamoorthy

On strengthening unity, Preethi has this to offer: "We should learn to look at each other as one nation rather than different races. That will help us to form a more powerful nation that will be able to compete against the rest of the world."

Saravanan Krishnamoorthy of Kuala Lumpur said all three races need each other in the nationhood process.

Saravanan believes in order for the three races to co-exist in a progressive nation, there must be a "give-and-take" attitude.

MALAYSIA IS UNIQUE

An international student from Bangladesh Mohammad Golam Kibria Khan said patriotism is evident in Malaysia's young people.



Mohammad
Golam

"It is very much alive in my own country, and we feel proud of our own country," he said.

"Like my Malaysian friends, we also fly our national flag everywhere," he added.

The way youths here celebrate Merdeka creates a sense of nostalgia for Mohammad Golam, a final year Communication & Electronic Engineering student at UCSI. There is no doubt that Malaysia is a colourful country for Mohammad Golam.

"Oh yes! It's truly a multi-cultural country. It shows Malaysians feel for each other and also respect one another," he said.

Even Mohammad Golam has this to suggest to Malaysians: "I think as a nation, you should focus on the country as a whole rather than individuals."

For Nigerian, Abdullahi Adamu Aliero celebrating independence anniversary is the time for the citizens of his country to pay tribute to the national leaders who contributed to the development of the nation.

"Back in Nigeria, we have our celebration parade and all the amusement parks are open free-of-charge for the children.

"Adults also enjoy a good discount. This helps to bring families to come together and celebrate the nation's success," he said.



Abdullahi
Adamu Aliero

The only difference between his country and Malaysia as Abdullahi pointed out is the way Malaysians have learned to appreciate each other.

"This is amazing! Can you imagine three races living and working together! It shows Malaysians are very understanding and tolerant towards each other. It's not easy. We know how difficult it is in our own country."

Asked who they consider are the nation's unsung heroes, Sam said: "Well, my parents, of course! Without them, I won't be here."

Preethi said her father is one of the many unsung heroes.

"He was formerly an officer at SIRIM and has contributed a lot to the country through his research work at SIRIM," she said. "I think he deserves the honour, being one of the patriotic citizens who contributed much to nation-building."