

Challenge to Malaysian youths

THERE is a lot going for youths nowadays. The Government must take credit for this. In a matter of a few years, the Government has created many new avenues for the nation's youths to equip themselves with the necessary living skills. These include programmes to sharpen their entrepreneurship skills.

The newly-formed MAGIC, operating under the ambit of the Finance Ministry, has made impressive progress at inculcating innovation and creativity skills among the young.

At the Academy of Sciences Malaysia, the Young Scientists Network has been busy promoting the virtues of science among the young while many universities are actively attracting young academics to venture into start-ups.

It would not be far-fetched to suggest that nowadays associating youths with the "*mat rempit*" culture has largely fizzled away. If this can be sustained, then the country can look forward to a productive and rewarding future.

The new look Youths and Sports Ministry under its dynamic Minister Khairy Jamaluddin is also seen to be injecting a lot of positive vibes in the nation's youths.

At a recent event speaking to youths at the UCSI University, Khairy showed the substance he is made of. In his keynote address, he spoke with candour on how youths can make a difference to the nation's future. Khairy spoke about how youths nowadays need to venture beyond their own narrow boundaries in order to help shape a better world.

It is time to rid oneself of the parochial thinking related to ethnicity, religion and other self-fulfilling linkages. We need youths who think globally but act locally.

There is no denying that the world is flushed with all kinds of issues and problems. Top of the global concern is the issue of sustainability. How can the world survive with the growing population soon to touch eight billion? And it will not stop there. Will we have enough food to feed the world? Will there be sufficient energy to drive the global economy?

And it has to be the right kind of energy as well, not one that will destroy the climate and pollute the waters of the world. Since it is mostly about the future well-being of the world, youths will definitely have a strategic role to play.

As a small country of about 30 million people, and growing, the global issues are also our issues. Khairy spoke about how our youths must embrace new attitudes and practices to help build and sustain a prosperous and competitive Malaysia. He strongly advocated long-term thinking and planning.

We often suffer from short-term strategising which seldom produces the right outcome. We need to focus on what we can control and stay on course. The only way to remain focused in the long term is to shut out the noise.

Take football as an example. The Ministry is embarking on a long-term programme to develop the nation's football talents. It is an important investment because, as we are all aware, football is most

connected to the nation's Gross National Happiness. As a nation, we need the feel-good factor in order to face the many challenges in the economy and society.

Khairy's message was clear. Youths will have to have clear targets and stay clear of the silo mentality. All youths have to break ranks and work as teams if they are to have a chance to make Malaysia a better place to live in. At the same time, taking risks and daring to endure failures should come natural to all youths. If they can embrace Khairy's counsel, then we can look forward to a bright future for the country.

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