

'His Majesty a symbol of unity'

KUALA LUMPUR: As the nation celebrated the official birthday of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah yesterday, Malaysians hoped that the King would continue to be the main driver of unity among the nation's multi-ethnic and multi-religious society.

Universiti Putra Malaysia's Department of Nationhood and Civilisation Studies lecturer Assoc Prof Mohd Mahadee Ismail said His Majesty was expected to continue leading the people and nation in the prevailing environment of peace and harmony.

He said the King's openness and his caring and friendly nature had not only earned him a place in the hearts of the people, but also helped to narrow the gap between the royal institution and commoners.

"His Majesty can be likened to a 'congenial bridge' between the royal institution and the people as he makes it a point to go on the ground to check their welfare.

"In fact, he has also a number of times stopped at road

accident sites and even got down from his car to render a helping hand to the victims," said Mohd Mahadee, adding that Al-Sultan Abdullah would also drop by shops and food stalls to mingle with the locals.

It was this down-to-earth attitude of the King and also Raja Permaisuri Agong Tunku Hajah Azizah Aminah Maimunah Iskandariah that had touched the hearts of the people, he added.

Big-Hearted

Mohd Mahadee also said the institution of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong was entrusted with the role of strengthening the Malaysian nation-state by creating a united, patriotic and nationalistic society.

In March, Al-Sultan Abdullah upheld the sovereignty of the Malay rulers when he successfully resolved the political crisis that engulfed the nation in a calm, fair and wise manner, which received the support of the Conference of Rulers and Malaysians in general.

"His Majesty is also seen as a big-hearted ruler who pushes

the interests and welfare of the people to the forefront. During the Covid-19 crisis, the King called for priority to be given to the people in terms of healthcare services and adequate supply of essentials," said Mohd Mahadee.

In return, he added, Malaysians should play their part by pledging their unwavering loyalty to their King and nation in line with one of the principles of the Rukun Negara, namely 'Loyalty to King and Nation'.

Constitutional monarchy

Sharing his views, International Islamic University Malaysia law lecturer Prof Nik Ahmad Kamal Nik Mahmud said in serving as the supreme symbol of the nation's sovereignty, Al-Sultan Abdullah was expected to continue strengthening the practice of constitutional monarchy.

"As head of state, His Majesty is expected to drive the best model of governance based on Islamic laws as outlined by the Conference of Rulers and other provisions set by the Federal Constitution," he said.

According to him,

constitutional monarchy is based on the principle that the Yang di-Pertuan Agong acts in accordance with the advice of the Cabinet (usually the Prime Minister) and legal provisions such as Article 40 of the Federal Constitution.

"The system of constitutional monarchy balances the power of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong as the ruler and the people.

"This role of reciprocity between the ruler and the people is important in order to uphold this tradition," he explained.

Besides his position as the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, the King's duties also cover the executive, legislative and judiciary – the three branches of the government stipulated in the Federal Constitution, said Nik Ahmad Kamal.

"His Majesty is the catalyst to national unity and the nation's progress. Malaysians should strive to understand the importance of the royal institution and efforts must be made continuously at all levels to ensure that Malaysia's institution of constitutional monarchy is respected by all," he added. — Bernama