

Cultivating national identity should begin in schools, says Akademi Kenegaraan Malaysia

By **Amalia Azmi** - August 7, 2024 @ 4:25pm



Fostering a strong national identity should start with students in schools, says Akademi Kenegaraan Malaysia deputy director-general Datuk Ismail Yusop. - NSTP/Zain Ahmed (for illustration purposes only)

KUALA LUMPUR: Fostering a strong national identity should start with students in schools, says Akademi Kenegaraan Malaysia deputy director-general Datuk Ismail Yusop.

This, he said, was crucial to ensure young people make informed decisions and effectively fulfil their responsibilities as citizens.

"We (Malaysians) are the ones who determine what kind of independent nation we want (aspire to). If we do not make decisions about our future, others will 'design' it for us.

"Not only others. Social media can also influence the nation's future and shape public perception," he told reporters after the Malaysia Madani national corporate seminar here today.

Also in attendance were New Straits Times Press (M) Bhd group managing editor Datuk Ahmad Zaini Kamaruzzaman, and 54 Media Prima staff members.

Earlier, Ismail delivered a talk titled "Malaysia Madani dan Negara Bangsa", organised by Akademi Kenegaraan of the Prime Minister's Department, in collaboration with Media Prima Bhd here today.

On another matter, he said the agency was working with the Education Ministry and Higher Education Ministry to implement a key module within their five focus clusters.

"One of our key modules is the Malaysia Future Leaders School, where Form Three students receive exposure and are screened through three stages for a five-day course before being selected for the Malaysia Global Future Leaders programme.

He said that while the school system included civic education and history, these were insufficient to build a robust national identity.

"Building a sense of (national) identity is essential because identity is not something that happens by chance or is nurtured in everyone.

"Young people need to understand the historical context and these elements, which we emphasise in our nationhood module," he said.

Meanwhile, he said it was crucial for the agency to establish the Malaysia Madani concept with the public, especially the younger generation.

Ismail said he was confident that if both the government and private sectors contributed to spreading the concept, it would positively influence mainstream perceptions and elevate Malaysia's status as a sovereign and respected nation that has dignity.

"Today's generation lives in an environment characterised by the democratisation and liberalisation of information, where people have more access to information but must also filter out false information.

"That's why our approach emphasises 'engagement' with interactive modules and technology such as Kahoot (which is an online game-based learning platform), as people are no longer interested in narratives, lengthy lectures and other similar methods."