

A Show of Unity at TAR UMT



One for the album: (Fourth from left) Siok Choo, Tengku Rozani, Tengku Norin, Dr Wee, Liow, Chan and Prof Lee with other members of the TAR UMT community in a group shot at the event.

N-Day event celebrates spirit of togetherness, say grandkids of founding fathers

KUALA LUMPUR: Tunku Abdul Rahman University of Management and Technology (TAR UMT) celebrated unity by hosting a “Malaysiaku Jiwaku” (My Malaysia, My Soul) National Day celebration at its main campus in Setapak.

Joining the memorable occasion were Tengku Rozani Putra and Tengku Norin Putra, the granddaughters of the late Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj; and Datin Paduka Tan Siok Choo, the daughter of the late Tun Tan Siew Sin and granddaughter of MCA founder the late Tun Tan Cheng Lock.

Both the Tunku and Siew Sin – who were the nation’s first prime minister and second finance minister, respectively – had played an instrumental role in establishing the institution.

The occasion, which was a culmination of a three-week-long celebration held in conjunction with the nation’s 66th National Day on Aug 31, was a first for the full-fledged university, which was officially formed upon receiving its certificate of registration from the Higher Education Department on Nov 7 last year.

Speaking to reporters after the event, Tengku Rozani said the celebration brought people together in a spirit of togetherness. “The event was very well done, and it had a lot of passion. I am happy that the video clip about how Merdeka was achieved was played. It should be played every year,” she said yesterday.

Siok Choo, who is also TARC Education Foundation board of trustees member, said the event recalled the spirit where the nation’s forefathers fought for independence. “To do that, they had to show the British that all the communities could work together,” she said.

MCA president and TARC Education Foundation board of trustees chairman Datuk Seri Dr Wee Ka Siong said the younger generation must be told of the importance of independence and the journey it took to get Malaysia there. He said youths needed to know the history of Malaysia.

“Most important is national unity, the spirit of togetherness before independence, how we achieved independence, and subsequently, how we built this together – this country belongs to all of us,” he told reporters after officiating the celebration.

Dr Wee also said National Day is for all Malaysians to celebrate, regardless of where one is and what tagline one chooses to use. “How we appreciate national unity, how we make Merdeka become more meaningful to all Malaysians – that is more important; the rest is just rhetoric,” he said when asked for comments on Perikatan Nasional’s proposal for a different National Day theme and logo in the four states under its control.

He said such rhetoric had happened before and what was most important is the spirit of togetherness. “You can celebrate in your own way – some celebrate in kampung, some in cafes. It doesn’t matter. “For all politicians from both sides of the divide, let us work together. We sing the same national anthem, and we have a love for the same country,” he said.

Earlier in his speech, Dr Wee paid tribute to the late Tunku. “We are immensely proud to be a part of an institution named after the nation’s Father of Independence. “The late Tunku was the epitome of nation-building, a man with valuable vision and patriotism that drove him to fight and demand for our independence as Malaysians, which we celebrate even up to this day.

“As a university named after this exemplary leader, TAR UMT will continue to uphold this legacy of excellence in shaping minds that will excel beyond education,” he said.

The university – with five branch campuses in Penang, Perak, Pahang, Johor and Sabah – started as a community college in 1969 before being upgraded to university college status known as Tunku Abdul Rahman University College (TAR UC) in 2013.

“This (celebration) is not just a significant milestone, but also a moment for us to be proud of our university for giving the opportunity for all Malaysians to obtain a quality tertiary qualification. Without the then TAR College, many would not have been able to go on to fulfilling, meaningful careers and lives, and the country would lack the much-needed skilled human capital to support our boom and growth after independence,” said Dr Wee.

“This is how we have contributed towards nation-building all these years and we will always be proud of this legacy.” He added that the institution’s legacy lies in the strength of its close to 300,000 alumni members, who have been exemplary figures in their own right, including giving back to society.

Moving forward, TAR UMT will harness innovation and technology so that it will continue nurturing and guiding future generations of Malaysians, he said. “Our upcoming Student Centre and Small and Medium Enterprises Centre is a great example of this, where it will house the latest innovation and technology in teaching facilities, allowing us to equip our students with the skills and knowledge needed to excel in an increasingly digital world,” he said.

Also present at the event were TAR UMT board of governors chairman Tan Sri Liow Tiong Lai; TAR UMT alumni council chairman and board of governors member Tan Sri Chan Kong Choy; and TAR UMT president Prof Dr Lee Sze Wei.