

Promoting Bangsa Johor

THIS year, Johoreans have been more united than ever, thanks to Johor ruler Sultan Ibrahim Ibni Almarhum Sultan Iskandar who has been strongly promoting Bangsa Johor.

Although the concept of Bangsa Johor was disapproved by a prominent leader, Sultan Ibrahim slammed critics and got the full backing of the state government and many non-governmental organisations.

He explained that the concept was initiated by his great grandfather Sultan Sir Ibrahim in 1920 to unite the various races in Johor under one flag for greater cooperation, harmony and peaceful existence.

Even when Sultan Ibrahim decreed a ban on street demonstrations in the state, which he viewed as an unhealthy trend that could jeopardise unity, Johoreans stood united and supported his ban.

"Lately, I have seen a new unhealthy culture emerging in our country, which is street demonstrations. The actions of certain individuals and people gathering in public places and insulting leaders are irresponsible," he had said.

Many concurred that such demonstration only created public nuisance, as there were other appropriate channels for the rakyat to voice their concerns.

Sultan Ibrahim sparked a frenzy when he announced the ban on vaping as of last Jan 1, which he pointed out was for the greater good of the people.

"I did my research and this is not our custom. Neither is *shisha*. I was shocked and disgusted when I saw women in headscarves and even children puffing away.

"I realised that this was the beginning of a disaster and had to put my foot down as soon as possible. To me, this is a technology drug that will be harmful. Unlike (other) drugs, this is difficult to detect," he was quoted as saying.

Sultan Ibrahim's care and love for his subjects was even more evident when he swiftly made an appearance at Hospital Sultanah Aminah after a fire broke out at the hospital's intensive care unit.

He immediately directed the hospital authorities to open up the royal ward to temporarily house patients displaced by the incident that shook the nation on Oct 25.

On a brighter note this year, the Ruler also created history by being the first Johor Sultan to celebrate

Sultan Ibrahim Ibni Almarhum Sultan Iskandar has been going to the ground to unite the people.



Johor ruler Sultan Ibrahim (middle) accompanied by his son Tunku Temenggong Tunku Idris Iskandar (far right) with state Tourism Committee chairman Datuk Tee Siew Kiong (far left) at the launch of the Prosperity Dragon tunnel at Yong Peng's Green Garden. — Filepic

major occasions such as the Chingay parade and Thaipusam with the rakyat.

Besides the usual chants of *Heng Ah! Huat Ah!*, the crowd also greeted Sultan Ibrahim with energetic cheers of 'Daulat Tuanku' throughout the procession when he attended the traditional event held for the 144th time on Feb 28.

The love and support for Sultan Ibrahim from people of all backgrounds were again evident when thousands turned up at the Thaipusam celebration in the small town of Renggam, just to catch a glimpse of their much-loved Ruler.

He even revived a 65-year-old tradition of hosting a tea party with the Chinese community at the Istana Besar on Sept 21.

Symbolically held in the palace's Chinese Hall (Dewan Cina), the party was held for the seventh time since 1875 during the era of the first modern Johor Ruler Almarhum Sultan Abu Bakar.

At the event, Sultan Ibrahim

urged the rakyat to be smart when choosing their leaders and not blindly follow political ideology that could threaten the unity of the community in the state.

Known for his friendliness and passion, the Sultan has also been getting up close and personal with his people through the *Kembara Mahkota Johor* expedition, which has been running the past 15 years, going from village to village and town to town.

This year was no exception; for four days Sultan Ibrahim drove his much talked about Mack truck in all 10 districts. The expedition included two buses, 35 Harley Davidson motorcycles and 10 four-wheel drives.

In October, Sultan Ibrahim once again showed his soft side when he made a young die-hard JDT fan Muhammad Hazreel Mikhail Hizar's wish of meeting the Ruler and the Tunku Mahkota Johor Tunku Ismail come true.

Sultan Ibrahim, accompanied by



The Johor ruler (middle) hosted a tea party with the Chinese community at Istana Besar in Johor Baru. — Filepic

his two sons Tunku Ismail and Tunku Temenggong Tunku Idris Iskandar, made a surprise visit to the home of the five-year-old who suffers from a rare skin disease called epidermolysis bullosa.

He gave Muhammad Hazreel official JDT merchandise including football jerseys, hoodies, wristbands and a football signed by TMJ, besides a cash contribution to cover his medical expenses.