No UMS X’mas carnival again

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KOTA KINABALU: Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) Christmas party was again held off campus this year after a last minute technical problem prevented the annual celebration from being held at the university’s chancellor hall.

“I have discussed the matter with the university’s deputy vice chancellor in charge of Student Affairs and Alumni Associate Professor Dr Ismail Ali that next year, we urge the organising committee to book the hall early so that there will not be any technical problem again,” said Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Datuk Seri Wilfred Madius Tangau (pic).

He said this when opening the Christmas celebration held at the Glory Christian Centre in Damai here on Sunday.

Tangau who is also acting Umno President said as a leader, it is vital that one should always work towards unity and harmony and work with those under them to increase and strengthen the ties between both parties.

“Earlier today I attended a Muslim religious event in Tenghilan and as leaders, this is something that we must always strive to do, which is to work towards peace and harmony. This is the key to a peaceful country especially in a multiracial and multi-religious society.

“We are trained by what happened around us when it comes to religious tolerance. It is a very sensitive issue and deeply affect the unity and relationship between the people,” he said.

Therefore, he said, that is why Malaysians including university students, must always seek to understand others instead of seeking to be understood.

It is better, he said, to understand other people’s faith and their feelings and why their religions teach the adherence of such and such doctrines in order to respect those who profess a belief different than theirs.

“We don’t ask for respect but we respect others and when we do that, we hope that they will respect us in return and we will build a culture where we could respect one another,” he said.

The Federal government, he added, is very concerned about the issue of unity and had introduced various approaches including the formation of Yayasan Inovasi Malaysia under his ministry where innovative products were produced including an innovative approach to increase harmony among the people.

Addressing the organising committee, Tangau said after four years of facing challenges, he hoped that the committee will continue to mature and succeed in making the annual Christmas celebration the university’s tradition and culture.

“For Christians, the business of the Levites belongs to the Levites. In other words, when we are faced with heavy challenges including bizarre policies, be confident that we have a God who is all powerful, always there as a living God, for every time we pray, if we believe, it will be given to us.

“Sometimes when something happens in relation to religious matters, there are those who are too quick to politicise or point fingers at one another.

“But if we take that approach, it won’t benefit us. What can solve your problem when it comes to religious matters is prayer that the problem can be solved amicably,” he said.

He also extended an invitation to all UMS students and lecturers and staff to attend his Christmas Open House which will be held on Dec 27 at the Dewan Sri Sulaman in Tuaran from 10am to 4pm.

For two years in a row, the UMS Christmas celebration was organised off campus after the organising committee failed to obtain permission to hold the event at the university’s Chancellor Hall.

The university however had no qualms of allowing the religious celebrations of other religions or even the Harvest Festival which is always held on a grand scale.

The celebration was finally held on campus last year after Tangau raised the issue to the media and the university made a U-turn on its decision to ban the celebration, citing fear of congestion and parking problems.

This year however, it was learned that the Chancellor Hall was unavailable after the university decided to renovate the hall, particularly the stage.