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BE PATRIOTIC, ZALEHA TELLS TEENS

SUBANG JAYA, March 30 (Bernama) -- National Unity and Social Development Minister Datin Paduka Zaleha Ismail today urged teenagers to be more patriotic and to show respect for symbols of national identity.

"Attitudes like respect for the national flag as a symbol of national unity are necessary for instilling a sense of self-awareness and respect for society and the country," she said, adding that they must also be responsible and love the country and its leaders.

Speaking to reporters after presenting prizes to winners of a poetry-writing competition, Zaleha called on parents to provide opportunities and encouragement for their children to express themselves.

She said the ministry, through the National Unity Department, was constantly working to eradicate racial, anti-government and other negative issues at the school level.

Chan Peng-Joon, 12, who dedicated his poem to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, won the first prize of a plot of land.

Jointly organised by the Lion Group and Kelab Cinta Malaysia with the theme "Merdeka Parade -- This Land is My Land", the competition was held in conjunction with the 39th National Day celebration last year. -- BERNAMA

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