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Dr M launches programme to spread, re-instil patriotic spirit

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PUTRAJAYA, Wed. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today launched the Kembara Merdeka 2001 programme designed to re-instil and spread the patriotic spirit as the country approaches its 44th year of independence.

The programme, organised by the Information Department, seeks to sow and nurture the spirit and appreciation of the citizenry for the development and prosperity the country enjoyed since independence.

Its other aims are:

- \* To have the participation of the people in making a success of the Government's planned development programmes;
- \* to evolve a harmonious society that is helpful, united and without suspicion and
- \* to have closer co-operation among individuals, government agencies and the private sector in nation building efforts.

The Kembara Merdeka 2001 programme with the theme KeranaMu Malaysia will run from today till Aug 17 in Peninsular Malaysia and from Aug 18-25 in Sabah and Sarawak.

At the launch, Dr Mahathir fixed miniature Jalur Gemilang flags on some of the four-wheel drives that would ferry programme lecturers around the country.

The 24 lecturers comprise 16 officers from the Information Department and four each from the Islamic Development Department and the Special Affairs Department.

A total of 45,000 miniature national flags will be distributed.

Also present at the launch were Information Minister Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob, his deputy Datuk Khalid Yunus, the ministry's parliamentary secretary Datuk Zainuddin Maidin and secretary-general Datuk Dr Arshad Hashim.