

Ambang Merdeka to pay tribute to Dr Mahathir

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BY RENEE CHOONG

KUALA LUMPUR: The Culture, Arts and Tourism Ministry has urged all programmes for the Ambang Merdeka 2003 celebration to reflect the country's progress in development and multiculturalism as a tribute to Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Deputy minister Datuk Dr Ng Yen Yen said this would be an important aspect for all state governments, agencies, the private sector and the nation as a whole to adhere to as a mark of respect for the Prime Minister.

"There's an important significance in this focus as we want to emphasise the achievements we have made under the administration of Dr Mahathir, who has been with us for the past 21 years," said Dr Ng during a briefing at the National Art Gallery auditorium yesterday.

Ambang Merdeka, on the eve of National Day, will also make its mark as the biggest and grandest festival ever held since its inception in 2000.

Representatives from various sectors, such as Malaysia Airports, Putra LRT, highway concessionaires, hotels, entertainment outlets and institutions of higher learning were briefed by Dr Ng on the "must-do" list for the night.

Among the patriotic gestures are to hoist the national flag at all premises and organise non-stop activities on the eve of National Day.

The theme song *Keranamu Malaysia* and *Jalur Gemilang* must also be played besides the shout of "Merdeka" seven times when the clock strikes 12.

"Above it all, we want to see Malaysians of all races and backgrounds to be in a festive mood and to revel in the fact that a nation of 23 million people can come together to celebrate one single celebration," said Dr Ng, who is also Wanita MCA chief.

The month-long Merdeka celebrations will begin on Aug 17 and end on Sept 16.