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Kadir-Merdeka

REMINISCENCE OVER MALAYSIA'S SUCCESS AMONG NATIONAL DAY EVENTS

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 7 (Bernama) -- A programme which will reminisce Malaysia's successes under the leadership of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for the past 22 years is among the five major events in conjunction with the Merdeka Month celebrations beginning Aug 17.

Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Paduka Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir said the programme would be held during the National Day procession on Aug 31 at the Dataran Putra, Putrajaya.

"We are sad because this will be the Dr Mahathir's last celebration (as Prime Minister), so we will reminisce in various ways, our successes (under Dr Mahathir's leadership) between 1981 and 2003," he said at a media conference on the Merdeka Month celebrations, here today.

In addition, he said, this year's Merdeka Month would have a difference whereby on the eve of Aug 31, at midnight on Aug 30, all toll plazas nationwide would stop operations temporarily.

Abdul Kadir said this was to enable highway users to also join in the celebrations with the singing of the national anthem "Negaraku" and the raising of the national flag "Jalur Gemilang" at all toll centres in the country.

"All vehicles have to stop and respect the singing of the Negaraku and the raising of the Jalur Gemilang which will take place at midnight," he said.

Other events include the launching of the Merdeka Month and the raising of the Jalur Gemilang at the national level which will be performed by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi in Melaka on Aug 17.

At the ceremony, Abdullah will also launch the programme to reminisce the moment when the "Father of Independence", Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Alhaj declared the date for Malaya's independence upon his return from London.

There would also be religious programmes according to the respective religions of the various races, and for Muslims, the sermon for the Friday prayers on Aug 29 would touch on independence, he said.

On that day, Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Syed Putra Jamalullai, accompanied by the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and other Muslim cabinet ministers would perform Friday prayers at the National Mosque.

"The climax of the celebrations will be the National Day procession which will be held at the Dataran Putra, Putrajaya for the first time," he said.

Abdul Kadir said Putrajaya was chosen as the venue as a special present and to express the country's and people's appreciation to Dr Mahathir who was the architect responsible for moulding Malaysia and the Malaysian race as they appeared today before his retirement in October.

He said the closing ceremony for the Merdeka Month celebrations would be held in Sabah to commemorate Sabah's and Sarawak's independence within Malaysia.

He hoped all strata of society would join in to celebrate the Merdeka Month and to fly the Jalur Gemilang wherever they might be.

-- BERNAMA

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