

01/09/2003

National Day messages and campus elections highlighted

Balan Moses; Ramlan Said; Lim Chee Wei

PICTURES of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad waving the Jalur Gemilang in Petaling Street and Dataran Merdeka were put on the front page by all major Chinese dailies yesterday as the nation celebrated its 46th year of independence.

Also dominating the headlines in Sin Chew Daily and Oriental Daily News was the Prime Minister's National Day address in which he reminded all Malaysians to be disciplined and not be greedy.

MCA president Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting, in his National Day message, reiterated the importance of safeguarding racial harmony and political stability.

While Aug 31 saw Malaysians from all walks of life celebrating the country's freedom from colonisation, the harmony was not mirrored in major campuses in the country with candidates from rival camps making their final push in the ultimate test - the campus elections.

The nomination process on Saturday ended without incident, Nanyang Siang Pau said. This year's election again pit the so-called "pro-Government" camp, commonly referred to by the Chinese dailies as the "Blue" team, against the Opposition-aligned "Green" team.

According to the report, the Blue team had a good start in University of Malaya when, from the 39 seats up for grabs, it won three uncontested.

In Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, both the Blue and Green teams were locked in a straight fight for all 32 seats. It was the same in Universiti Putra Malaysia, where the teams are squaring off for 45 seats.

Up in the north, 10 Chinese students were among the candidates nominated by the Blue and the Green teams in Universiti Sains Malaysia.

Forty-seven nominations were registered in Universiti Utara Malaysia in the contest for 30 seats while in Universiti Teknologi Malaysia in the south, 131 candidates had offered themselves for the 45 seats at stake. In the latter, 45 candidates were fielded by the Green faction.

Students are expected to cast their votes on Sept 4.

Oriental Daily News also gave prominence to the campus elections in its national edition yesterday. According to its analysis, a split in Chinese votes was expected following the fielding of more Chinese candidates by both camps.