

It's OK to wear the flag

Wong: What matters is the intention behind its creative use

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KUALA LUMPUR: Use it as clothing, headwear or costume.

Malaysians can choose to use the *Jalur Gemilang* in their most creative style and in any appropriate manner, said Deputy Culture, Arts and Heritage Minister Datuk Wong Kam Hoong.

However, he added, a person who uses the national flag to cover the seat of his motorcycle, for example, would be showing disrespect to the *Jalur Gemilang* as he would be sitting on the flag.

"It's all right if people wear it as an

outfit, as long as the intention is to show love and pride for the country," he told *The Star*.

Wong said the late Sudirman Arshad wore the *Jalur Gemilang* as a stage costume when presenting a patriotic song.

"I have seen people wearing it as a uniform in National Day parades and have also seen a young person wearing it as a trendy head scarf," he added, commenting on a recent wedding where both the bride and groom wore outfits inspired by the *Jalur Gemilang*.

"It's easy to draw the line between the appropriate and inappropriate use

of the flag - it's all about the attitude of the wearer.

"If it is to show pride and patriotism, it's okay. But if it is to show disrespect for the flag then that's wrong." Information Minister Datuk Seri Zainuddin Maidin, expressing similar sentiments, said it was all right to be creative in displaying the national flag, including wearing it as clothes, especially during National Day.

"In the United States, they even use their national flag as table cloth during their Independence Day celebration or as a cap. Some people here use it as a *songkok*," he said.

"What matters is the intention."

Acts such as stepping on the flag and setting it on fire were disrespectful to the national emblem, Zainuddin said.

"There are many ways to show your love for the flag. But of course, if you choose to hang it on a toilet door, that is disrespectful," he added.

He advised Malaysians not to put up flags that were soiled, saying that it would be disrespectful to the national flag.

He also urged Malaysians to mark the National Day celebrations with brand new flags, as this would create a better atmosphere for the auspicious occasion.