

# War veterans, freedom fighters to join parade

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** War veterans and independence fighters will be part of the parade in this year's golden anniversary Merdeka celebrations in August.

The parade will also feature the progress and achievements of the country under the five prime ministers and 13 Yang di-Pertuan Agong since independence.

Culture, Arts and Heritage Minister Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim said a representative of the British royal family or that of British Prime Minister Tony Blair would be invited as a guest of honour.

Rais said large scale Merde-



ka celebrations would be held in London, Washington, Beijing and Sydney to usher the 50th Merdeka celebrations themed "Malaysiaku Gemilang".

The Merdeka celebrations will kickoff with the launching of the "Fly the Jalur Gemilang" campaign at the Dataran Pahlawan in Malacca on

Aug 17.

"On that day, there will be a re-enactment of the declaration of independence in 1957 at Dataran Pahlawan," Rais told a media briefing at his ministry yesterday.

On Aug 24, nationwide religious programmes of the different faiths will be held at mosques, churches and temples.

The "Ambang Merdeka" celebrations will be at Dataran Merdeka on Aug 30, where there will be a re-enactment of the lowering of the Union Jack and the raising of the Jalur Gemilang.

This will be followed by the National Day parade the next morning at the same venue, while the king will host a tea

party for dignitaries later that evening.

"On the night of Aug 31, the Merdeka Day grand celebrations will be held at Stadium Merdeka.

"In attendance will be the king, rulers, governors, cabinet ministers, war veterans and independence fighters to witness a re-enactment of the 1957 Merdeka celebration," said Rais.

He added that this year's month-long Merdeka celebrations would officially close six days ahead on Sept 10 in Kuching to accommodate the Sarawak government's request.

All the events hosted by the various states started in January.