

THE STAR

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Vintage car for N-Day event

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US model will be used for Aug 17 launch

PENANG: A Nash Metropolitan convertible, similar to the one Tunku Abdul Rahman Al-Haj rode in when he was in Malacca to announce the country's independence from Britain in February 1956, will be brought in from the United States for the launch of the 50th Merdeka Month celebration.

Deputy Culture, Arts and Heritage Minister Datuk Wong Kam Hoong said the same car model could not be found in Malaysia anymore.

"A similar car will be brought in from the US for the launching on Aug 17 as we want it to be as authentic as possible," he told reporters yesterday when announcing the National Day events here.

In 1956, Tunku made a trip to London to negotiate the country's independence. Upon his arrival at the Bandar Hilir Padang (Dataran Pahlawan) in Malacca, he announced the good news to the crowd of some 100,000 people.

Wong, who is also Bayan Baru MP, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi would launch the Merdeka Month celebration at the same place. The launching is among seven major events to mark the country's 50th National Day.

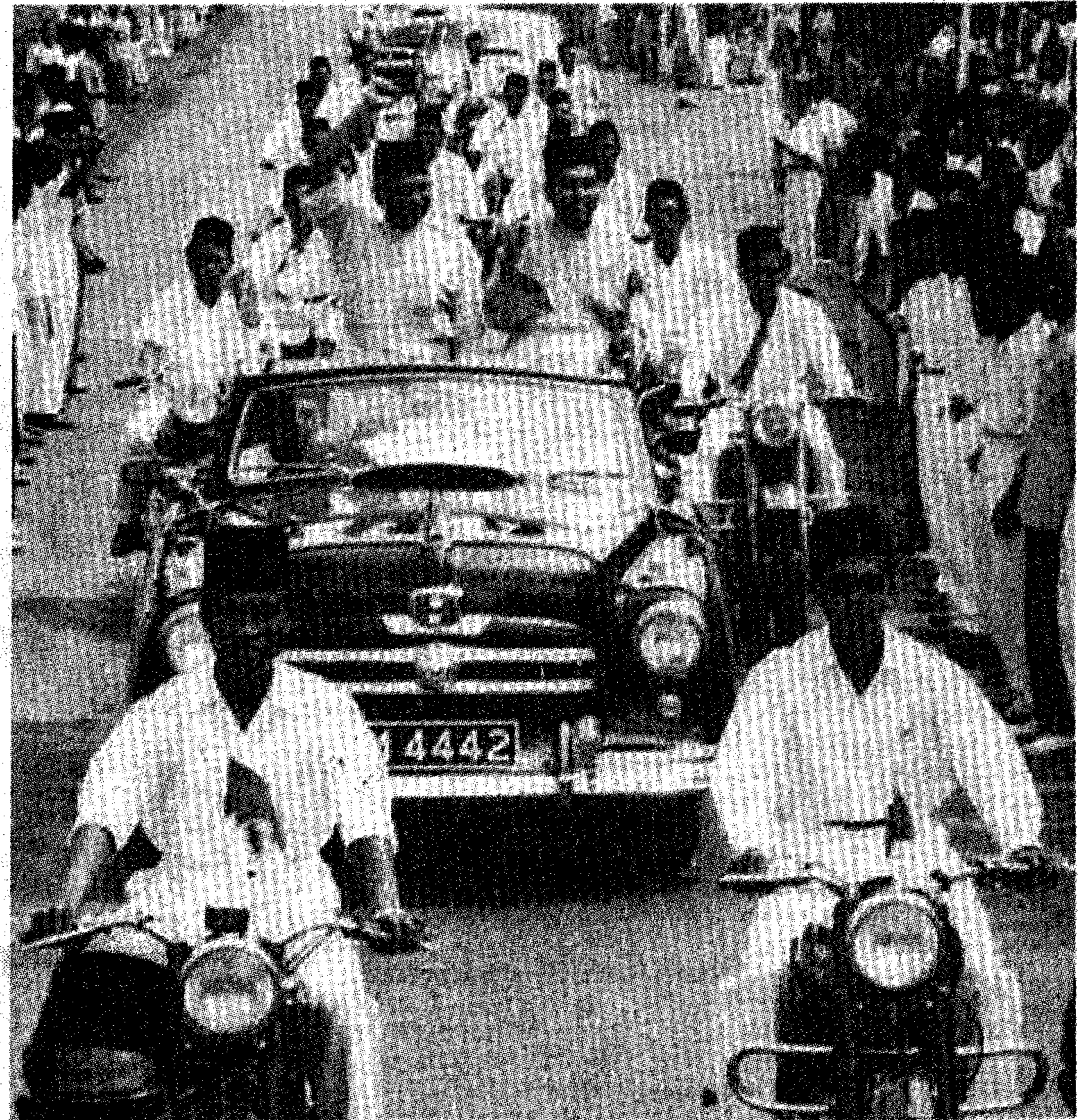
"The other events include a religious pro-

gramme on Aug 29 to pray for the peace, safety and prosperity of the nation. The Prime Minister and Muslim Cabinet ministers will perform prayers with the Muslim public at the National Mosque," he said.

Wong said Housing and Local Government Minister Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting would join Buddhists in prayers while Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu would pray with Hindus and Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Tan Sri Bernard Dompok with Christians.

"We must not only enjoy but also pray for our country's peace and prosperity," he added.

He said the other events were the Merdeka Eve celebration on Aug 30 at Dataran Merdeka in Kuala Lumpur, which would depict the eve of Merdeka 50 years ago complete with the lowering of the Union Jack and raising of the Malaysian flag; the Merdeka parade at Dataran Merdeka in the morning of Aug 31 and a tea party hosted by Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Mizan Zainal Abidin; a mammoth celebration with a laser light display at Merdeka Stadium which had been restored to its original condition on the night of Aug 31; and the Merdeka celebration in Kuching on Sept 10.



A ride to remember: A photo showing Tunku riding in the open top car bearing registration No: 4442 which was printed in the book 'Tunku: A Pictorial Biography' by Tan Sri Datuk Mubin Sheppard.