

**DAP rep draws heavy flak online**  
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**By Atiqa Hazellah and Michael Murty**

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The DAP's Kota Alam Shah assemblyman, M. Manoharan, who had suggested that the Jalur Gemilang be changed as it is too similar to the United States flag drew heavy flak from Malaysians yesterday.

Less than 24 hours after posting his thoughts online, he retracted it and issued an apology on his Facebook.

Manoharan caused a stir when he criticised the Jalur Gemilang, saying: "We don't have a world class flag".

"Pakatan will come up with a new flag, the current one is definitely out", he said on his Facebook wall.

"I have distributed many DAP flags in my constituency. I refuse to fly the Malaysian flag because it is seen as more of a flag for Barisan Nasional."

Manoharan voiced concern for Malaysians working in non-government organisations overseas, who might be hurt as they could be mistaken for Americans as the two flags look similar.

History Professor Emeritus Tan Sri Dr Mohd Yusof Hashim said the Jalur Gemilang had nothing to do with politics and that the symbols on it did not resemble the US flag.

He said the colour red symbolised courage, white indicated purity and the dark blue canton symbolised the unity of the people of Malaysia.

"I don't see the resemblance of our flag to the US flag. His perception is wrong," Yusof told New Straits Times yesterday.

"Since independence, nobody has ever questioned our flag. Why are they raising the issue now?," he said.

Yusof said Manoharan's remark that the Malaysian flag resembled the US flag was baseless.

"Besides, there are other countries with flags that look like the flags of other nations.

"I don't think Mohamad Hamzah (creator of Jalur Gemilang) copied the American flag," he said.

Umno Information Chief Datuk Ahmad Maslan said the opposition's intention to change the flag, once it came into power was evidence that they were not patriotic and not proud of their own country.

Deputy Information Communication and Culture Minister Datuk Joseph Salang said the Jalur Gemilang should not be manipulated for political reasons.

Parti Keadilan Rakyat vice-president Tian Chua twittered that there were no such discussions about the flag within Pakatan Rakyat and that they were committed to defending the constitution.

Many people had, yesterday, made their feelings known on Facebook calling Manoharan's statement "ridiculous".

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