

**Dr M says Pakatan sapping patriotism from Malaysians**  
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**By Clara Chooi**

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 6 — Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad today blamed Pakatan Rakyat's (PR) allegedly divisive political campaigns for the low-key display of patriotism by Malaysians during Merdeka Day and the flying of a pre-independence flag last week.

The former prime minister warned that under PR's rule, the country would no longer be governed by a single symbol of patriotism like the Jalur Gemilang, but would likely to be divided with different symbols aimed at causing discord among the various communities.

"Why the national flag was not really raised very much during Merdeka... my view is that this has something to do with the political campaign of the opposition parties.

"They (the opposition) are not loyal to the country, but they are loyal to their parties... and that is why they are even willing to come up with their own national flag," he told a teatime session by the Lembah Pantai Retirees Club here this evening.

Dr Mahathir was commenting on the action of several youths who had waved the Sang Saka Malaya, instead of the Jalur Gemilang at a public countdown to the 55th National Day here last week.

Leaders from the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition had alleged that PR intended to change the country's national flag, a claim the opposition pact immediately denied.

A blogger later admitted that he had waved the "alternative" flag together with his friend at Dataran Merdeka last Thursday, but said it was intended to educate the public about the nation's history.

In his attempt to shed light on the controversy, the blogger identified only as Singa Selatan said that they "do not represent any political party" and "clearly have no motive to change the Jalur Gemilang to Sang Saka Malaya."

According to the blogger, the Sang Saka Malaya — which sports a crescent moon and an 11-pointed star in the top left corner of the flag against a two-striped red and white background — was used by the first Malay party, Kesatuan Melayu Malaya (KMM) formed in 1938, that had fought against the colonial British for the country's independence.

Dr Mahathir also warned today that the flag incident could jeopardise the country's security, saying such divisive issues could cause a split among the different races.

"Because those who are loyal to the country should raise the national flag and we should teach our children to do that, especially during Merdeka Day," he said.

Dr Mahathir also appeared to blame PR for the perceived split in the Malay community, saying it was because the federal opposition prioritised their political agenda above uniting the races.

"Their efforts have caused a split among the Malays. And this is because they want erode Umno's influence on the Malays," he said.

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