

**MH17, MH370 Do Not Dampen Commitment To Celebrate 'Merdeka' - Najib
Bernama
August 18, 2014**

PUTRAJAYA, Aug 18 (Bernama) -- Despite the tragedies following the disappearance of the Malaysia Airlines (MAS) flight MH370 and the shooting down of the MH17, the commitment to translate and promote the spirit of patriotism and defend the sovereignty of Malaysia must go on. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said this commitment had contributed to the greatness of the nation which was always united in facing whatever challenges and obstacles that cropped up whether in sadness or happiness.

"The event that we are launching today has great meaning and significance because besides marking the starting of the 'Merdeka month' celebration which is most meaningful, it also demonstrates that as citizens we are proud to raise the national flag, Jalur Gemilang.

"The act of raising and flying the Jalur Gemilang becomes even more meaningful because the spirit of patriotism cannot be kept deep within our soul but must be exposed to show the strong sentiments of the Malaysian people," Najib said at the launching of the Merdeka Month celebration and Fly the Jalur Gemilang campaign, in Putrajaya, Monday.

Also present at the launching were Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Dr Ali Hamsa, Communications and Multimedia Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Shabery Cheek and other cabinet ministers.

Najib said the spirit of flying the Jalur Gemilang must be nurtured as the flag was a symbol of the country's pride and soul besides demonstrating the national identity that united the people.

He said that the Jalur Gemilang represented the sovereignty and independence of the nation besides a symbol of respect and pride of the people.

"Jalur Gemilang is also a sign of the people's solidarity and unity and their eagerness to fly the flag that is the pride of the nation.

"The Jalur Gemilang is not merely a piece of cloth but carries a most meaningful and deep aspiration," he said.

At the event, the Prime Minister flagged off the 'Jalur Gemilang Merdeka Tour Convoy' which will travel throughout the country to encourage the people to raise the flag and promote the spirit of patriotism among Malaysians.

A giant board was also put up opposite the Putrajaya Corporation building for the people to sign their name to record their condolences to the next-of-kin of victims of the MH17 and MH370 incidents.

Najib said that flying the Jalur Gemilang showed the appreciation of the people for the struggles of the nationalists who had placed the foundation for the successful development of an independent and sovereign nation.

He said that the act of flying the Jalur Gemilang must be embraced by all strata of society with a deep sense of patriotism and determination to uphold peace and harmony for a bright future.

"When deep in our heart is imbued this spirit of patriotism, then we will do whatever is necessary for the good of the people, religion and country.

"The flying of the Jalur Gemilang instils the feeling of love for the nation and the celebration of the country's independence also signifies that the nation has achieved success and not a country that has failed, as well as having undergone the process of transformation, poverty eradication and infrastructural development," he said.

He said that the theme for this year, "Malaysia: Here Lies a Love" was most appropriate because this feeling could become the basis in achieving the status of a developed nation in future.

The Prime Minister concluded his speech by calling on the people to raise the Malaysian flag whether at home, on office buildings or their vehicles to celebrate the 57th anniversary of the country's independence.

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