

## **Malay-Chinese duo to reclaim May 13 with unity message**

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**By Nawar Firdaws**

**PPBM's Syed Saddiq and his best friend, Chong Hock Soon, aim to make May 13 a day when the public unites under a common Malaysian identity.**

PETALING JAYA: May 13 may remind most Malaysians of blood baths and racial tension, but two young men have come up with a plan to make it a day of unity instead.

Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman and his best friend, Chong Hock Soon, will spend half the day tomorrow visiting at least five areas where the Malays and Chinese clashed 48 years ago.

They plan to wear their respective traditional outfits, and take on the role of human billboards, featuring the message "Saya Anak Malaysia" (I'm a Malaysian) on the front, and a cartoon version of themselves on the back.

"What we aim to achieve is to paint May 13 as something that is not just negative. Because all this while, it's viewed as a day where Malaysians were split," Syed Saddiq said in a press conference at the PPBM headquarters here today.

"But this day should be one to show our unity. The past is the past, the future is what we need to look forward to.

"So what we need to do from now on, is to show that despite past grievances and although we once fought against one another, Malaysians since that day have managed to stay united."

Syed Saddiq and Chong will also bring along 1,000 "letters of unity", which they will hand out to fellow Malaysians they meet.

Syed Saddiq said he and Chong were also ready to face members of the public who may lash out at them for bringing their message of unity, saying he was okay if that should happen as he preferred if critics voiced their disagreement rather than keep it bottled-up until another race-related incident erupted.

"We need to fight against those who would incite racial hatred on that day. I'm willing to have a dialogue with them.

"And this has nothing to do with politics. We won't be slamming Umno or the opposition. This is more about (reminding the public) of how Malaysians can overcome racial disunity.

“(May 13) can be a day where we unite under one common identity, which is the Malaysian identity,” he said.

Syed Saddiq, who is also PPBM Youth chief, added that he would try to make this an annual initiative.

He and Chong will begin their trip around Kuala Lumpur at 11am.

The May 13 racial riots of 1969 saw a vicious clash between Malays and Chinese, resulting in the deaths of more than 100 people.

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