

Kandapan Goes All Out For Merdeka Month

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By Nur Fadhliana Shaari

JOHOR BAHRU (Bernama) -- The Merdeka month is a favourite time for M. Kandapan, and he likes to go all out when it comes to showcasing his love for the nation.

This year, the 58-year-old businessman had a custom-made arch bearing the message 'Selamat Hari Merdeka' and this year's National Day theme 'Sayangi Malaysiaku' propped up in front of his home in Bandar Seri Alam, here.

"I have also had the pictures of our Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his wife Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamad Ali displayed on the arch.

"It also features the pictures of other statesmen like Tun Sambanthan and Tun Tan Cheng Lock," he told Bernama.

As if that was not enough, he had also gone a step further and decorated his home and vehicles with 5,000 Jalur Gemilang and Johor flag in commemoration of the special month.

INVESTING A LOT

For the past 20 years, the businessman has always come up with unique ways to show his patriotic side.

Ahli perniagaan M Kandapan tidak pernah jemu menghias kereta dan rumahnya dengan Jalur Gemilang bagi meraikan sambutan kemerdekaan negara setiap tahun.

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Every year, the father of five would spend thousands of Ringgit to decorate his home and vehicles with the Jalur Gemilang and stickers featuring the faces of the country's leaders. This was his way of sharing and evoking the patriotic spirit among fellow Malaysians.

Kandapan grew up in a rubber estate where he mingled with Malaysians of all races. He believed that the spirit of unity and patriotism should always be nurtured among the people even if by the mere act of flying the Jalur Gemilang in front of their homes or on their vehicles.

This year, he is decorating his Mercedes Benz with not only the Jalur Gemilang but stickers bearing the faces of Dr Mahathir, Dr Siti Hasmah and five other former Malaysian Prime Ministers.

He also had special Jalur Gemilang outfits made for his six grandchildren.

Kandapan, who spoke fluent Malay, said that he also distributed around 1,000 flags across schools within the city to enliven the national day spirit among students.

MONEY WELL SPENT

He refused to divulge the exact amount spent on this year's Merdeka celebration but believed that it was money well spent.

"The amount I have spent will never be enough to recompense the sacrifices made by those who fought for our country's freedom. We should be very grateful for the opportunity to live in peace in a multiracial country," he said.

He said that certain quarters had previously derided his efforts but he was not disheartened by it.

“I do not care if some people view what I do as a way to gain popularity. I do it because I believe in it,” said Kandapan.

His 54-year-old wife, S. Rani, and his family have, however, encouraged him to continue the effort.

He also feels encouraged when people, particularly foreigners, stop in front of his home to take a picture.

“They also do the same when they spot my car around town. They would stop me and ask to take a picture with me,” said Kandapan, who is planning to join a convoy to Putrajaya on Aug 31.

Translated by Sakina Mohamed

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