



# Malaysia's heroes for procession

> Bravery award recipients to take part in Merdeka Day march

**KUALA LUMPUR:** As the nation approaches Merdeka Day, a small group of warriors who earned top honours while serving the country are preparing for the much-acclaimed march past during celebrations at Dataran Merdeka.

Association of Bravery Award Recipients president Lt Kol (B) Robert Rizal Abdullah said they will be arriving here in stages for the procession on Saturday.

"These are recipients of *Panglima Gagah Berani* (PGB) and *Seri Perkasa* (SP) medals received for extreme bravery on the field. Many of them were wounded but pushed through despite their injuries," he told *theSun*.

"Things are good and peaceful today, and I am proud to say we have played our role in it," he added.

Association secretary Mej (B) Mohd H. Piah Ali, who will be present, said the group that will be marching past the Yang di-Pertuan Agong and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak is proud to have served the country.

"We played our cards (well) in bringing back peace during tumultuous times. It is now time for those in



Decorated war veterans Panirchellvum and Robert.

uniform to do their duty in maintaining harmony in the nation."

He added that he is working with the government to give lectures in motivational camps for students to ensure the younger generation has a sense of pride in the country.

Former army officer, Kapt (B) V. Panirchellvum, who will be arriving tomorrow, said this has been an annual routine for most of the bravery award recipients and that he looked forward to it. "The march past fills me with

pride every time I participate in it. I always try to make it despite my commitments," said the chief operating officer of Asian Plantations.

He said it was also an opportunity for him to meet other recipients of the awards and exchange notes.

"Many of them have become my close friends and I relish the chance to meet them at least once a year."

Panirchellvum would like the younger generation to emulate those who have sacrificed for the nation.

## Penang chided for own Merdeka theme

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**GEORGE TOWN:** The Penang government has been chided for coming up with its own Merdeka theme "Negaraku: Selamat, Bersih, Hijau, Sihat" (My Country: Safe, Clean, Green, Healthy) instead of using the federal government's "Malaysiaku Berdaulat: Tanah Tumpahnya Darahku" (My Sovereign Malaysia: My Native Land).

Penang Federal Action Council chairman Datuk Zainal Abidin Osman said the Merdeka celebrations should focus on national unity and solidarity, and not be politicised.

He said the federal theme was more apt than the Penang government's as it managed to express a sense of patriotism among the people.

"We hope the state government can be more magnanimous and accept the federal theme to portray a united nation," Zainal Abidin, who is also the Penang Umno liaison committee chairman, told a press conference yesterday.

This is not the first time the Pakatan Rakyat-led state administration has come under the spotlight for the same issue as it came up with "Budaya

Bersih, Merdekakan Rakyat" (Clean Culture, Liberty for the People) last year.

However, it eventually went with PR's "Sebangsa, Sehati, Sejiwa" (One Nation, One Heart, One Spirit) while celebrating the nation's 55th anniversary free from British colonial rule.

On a separate matter, Zainal Abidin also urged the state to contribute a share of the RM1 million subsidy to operate and maintain the Rapid Penang bus service as Syarikat Prasarana Sdn Bhd (SPNB) – the federal government's public infrastructure arm – was providing the monies since Rapid Penang was accruing monthly losses.

"Hopefully the state government can contribute its part to the subsidy for maintaining and operating the service for the benefit of the people," he said, adding that a further 200 buses are expected to arrive by this year and next.

On the increase in the Water Conservation Surcharge (WCS) by the Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBABB), Zainal Abidin said "this was a gift to Penang".

"This shows that the state government does not care about the people as they have a huge mandate," he said referring to PR's thumping win in Penang.

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